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POEMS OF GOETHE

The Works of J. W. von Goethe

With His Life by
GEORGE HENRY LEWES

In Fourteen Volumes
Volume IV

PUBLISHED BY
FRANCIS A. NICHOLS & CO.
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

"A Beauteous Maid with Downcast Look"
Photogravure from painting by F. Kirchbach

The Works of J. W. von Goethe

With His Life by
GEORGE HENRY LEWES

Edited by
NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

Translations by
SIR WALTER SCOTT, SIR THEODORE MARTIN
JOHN OXENFORD, THOMAS CARLYLE
AND OTHERS

In Fourteen Volumes
Volume IX.

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Poems of Goethe

DEDICATION.

I.

THE morning came. Its footsteps scared away
The gentle sleep that hovered lightly o'er me;
I left my quiet cot to greet the day,
And gaily climbed the mountainside before me.
The sweet young flowers! how fresh were they and tender,
Brimful with dew upon the sparkling lea;
The young day opened in exulting splendour,
And all around seemed glad to gladden me.

II.

And, as I mounted, o'er the meadow ground
A white and filmy essence 'gan to hover;
It sailed and shifted till it hemmed me round,
Then rose above my head, and floated over.
No more I saw the beauteous scene unfolded —
It lay beneath a melancholy shroud;
And soon was I, as if in vapour moulded,
Alone, within the twilight of the cloud.

III.

At once, as though the sun were struggling through,
Within the mist a sudden radiance started;

Here sunk the vapour, but to rise anew,
There on the peak, and upland forest parted.
Oh, how I panted for the first clear gleaming,
Made by the gloom it banished doubly bright!
It came not, but a glory round me beaming,
And I stood blinded by the gush of light.

IV.

A moment, and I felt enforced to look,
By some strange impulse of the heart's emotion;
But more than one quick glance I scarce could brook,
For all was burning like a molten ocean.
There, in the glorious clouds that seemed to bear her,
A form angelic hovered in the air;
Ne'er did my eyes behold a vision fairer,
And still she gazed upon me, floating there.

V.

"Dost thou not know me?" and her voice was soft
As truthful love, and holy calm it sounded.
"Know'st thou not me, who many a time and oft
Poured balsam in thy hurts when sorest wounded?
Ah, well thou knowest her, to whom for ever
Thy heart in union pants to be allied!
Have I not seen the tears — the wild endeavour
That even in boyhood brought me to thy side?"

VI.

"Yes! I have felt thy influence oft," I cried,
And sank on earth before her, half-adoring;
"Thou brought'st me rest when passion's lava tide
Thro' my young veins like liquid fire was pouring.
And thou hast fanned, as with celestial pinions,
In summer's heat, my parched and fevered brow;
Gav'st me the choicest gifts of earth's dominions,
And, save through thee, I seek no fortune now.

VII.

"I name thee not, but I have heard thee named,
And heard thee styled their own ere now by many;
All eyes believe at thee their glance is aimed,
Though thine effulgence is too great for any.
Ah! I had many comrades whilst I wandered —
I know thee now, and stand almost alone:
I veil thy light, too precious to be squandered,
And share the inward joy I feel with none."

VIII.

Smiling, she said — "Thou seest 'twas wise from thee
To keep the fuller, greater revelation:
Scarce art thou from grotesque delusions free,
Scarce master of thy childish first sensation;
Yet deem'st thyself so far above thy brothers,
That thou hast won the right to scorn them! Cease.
Who made the yawning gulf 'twixt thee and others?
Know — know thyself — live with the world in peace."

IX.

"Forgive me!" I exclaimed, "I meant no ill,
Else should in vain my eyes be disenchanted;
Within my blood there stirs a genial will —
I know the worth of all that thou hast granted.
That boon I hold in trust for others merely,
Nor shall I let it rust within the ground;
Why sought I out the pathway so sincerely,
If not to guide my brothers to the bound?"

X.

And as I spoke, upon her radiant face
Passed a sweet smile, like breath across a mirror,
And in her eyes' bright meaning I could trace
What I had answered well, and what in error.

She smiled, and then my heart regained its lightness,
And bounded in my breast with rapture high:
Then durst I pass within her zone of brightness,
And gaze upon her with unquailing eye.

XI.

Straightway she stretched her hand among the thin
And watery haze that round her presence hovered;
Slowly it coiled and shrunk her grasp within,
And lo! the landscape lay once more uncovered —
Again mine eye could scan the sparkling meadow,
I looked to heaven, and all was clear and bright;
I saw her hold a veil without a shadow,
That undulated round her in the light.

XII.

"I know thee! — all thy weakness, all that yet
Of good within thee lives and glows, I've measured;"
She said — her voice I never may forget —
"Accept the gift that long for thee was treasured.
Oh! happy he, thrice-blessed in earth and heaven,
Who takes this gift with soul serene and true,
The veil of song, by Truth's own fingers given,
Enwoven of sunshine and the morning dew.

XIII.

"Wave but this veil on high, whene'er beneath
The noonday fervour thou and thine are glowing,
And fragrance of all flowers around shall breathe,
And the cool winds of eve come freshly blowing.
Earth's cares shall cease for thee, and all its riot;
Where gloomed the grave, a starry couch be seen;
The waves of life shall sink in halcyon quiet;
The days be lovely fair, the nights serene."

XIV.

Come then, my friends, and whether 'neath the load
  Of heavy griefs ye struggle on, or whether
Your better destiny shall strew the road
  With flowers, and golden fruits that cannot wither,
United let us move, still forward striving;
  So while we live shall joy our days illume,
And in our children's hearts our love surviving
  Shall gladden them, when we are in the tomb.

A. M.

TO THE KIND READER.

No one talks more than a poet;
Fain he'd have the people know it,
  Praise or blame he ever loves;
None in prose confess an error,
Yet we do so, void of terror,
  In the Muses' silent groves.

What I erred in, what corrected,
What I suffered, what effected,
  To this wreath as flowers belong;
For the aged and the youthful,
And the vicious and the truthful,
  All are fair when viewed in song.

SOUND, SWEET SONG.

Sound, sweet song, from some far land,
Sighing softly close at hand,
  Now of joy, and now of woe!
  Stars are wont to glimmer so.
Sooner thus will good unfold;
Children young and children old
  Gladly hear thy numbers flow.

THE MODERN AMADIS.

They kept me guarded close, while yet
A little tiny elf,
And so I sat, and did beget
A world within myself,
All I cared to see.

Golden fancy then unfurled
Endless sights to me,
And a gallant knight I grew;
Like the Prince Pipi,
Roamed throughout the world.

Many a crystal palace saw,
Many overthrew;
My far-flashing falchion hurled
Through the dragon's maw.
Ha! then I was a man!

Next I freed in knightly wise
The Princess Periban;
Oh, the wonder of her eyes,
Smiling, as I wooed
Her with hearted sighs!

Her kiss, it was ambrosial food,
Glowed like noble wine;
With love, oh, I was almost dead!
A golden haze divine
She around her shed.

Who has torn her from my sight?
Can no spell delay
That dear vision, stay her flight?
Where her home, oh, say?
And thither, which the way?

"Dorilis then Gave It Me"

Photogravure from the painting by F. Kirchbach

WHEN THE FOX DIES HIS SKIN COUNTS.[1]

We young people in the shade
Sat one sultry day;
Cupid came, and "Dies the Fox"
With us sought to play.

Each one of my friends then sat
By his mistress dear;
Cupid, blowing out the torch,
Said: "The taper's here!"

Then we quickly sent around
The expiring brand;
Each one put it hastily
In his neighbour's hand.

Dorilis then gave it me,
With a scoffing jest;
Sudden into flame it broke,
By my fingers pressed.

And it singed my eyes and face,
Set my breast on fire;
Then above my head the blaze
Mounted ever higher.

Vain I sought to put it out;
Ever burned the flame;
'Stead of dying, soon the Fox
Livelier still became.

[1] The name of a game known in English as "Jack's Alight."

THE COQUETTE.

O'ER the meadows tripped sweet Kitty,
On a dewy morn in spring,
Like a lark, her blithesome ditty
Gaily, lightly carolling,
So la la! Le ralla.

Lubin, as she passed beside him,
Offered two lambs for a kiss;
Roguishly awhile she eyed him,
Tripped away, then carolled this,
So la la! Le ralla.

Ribbons red young Colin proffers,
Robin with his heart would wile,
But she mocks at all their offers,
Singing, as she mounts the stile,
So la la! Le ralla.

THE WILD ROSE.

A BOY espied, in morning light,
A little rosebud blowing;
'Twas so delicate and bright,
That he came to feast his sight,
And wonder at its growing
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Rosebud brightly blowing!

"I will gather thee," — he cried, —
"Rosebud brightly glowing!"
"Then I'll sting thee," it replied,

"And you'll quickly start aside
With the prickle glowing."
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Rosebud brightly blowing!

But he plucked it from the plain,
The rosebud brightly blowing!
It turned and stung him, but in vain —
He regarded not the pain,
Homeward with it going,
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,
Rosebud brightly blowing!

THE BREEZE.

The mists they are scattered,
The blue sky looks brightly,
And Eolus looses
The wearisome chain!
The winds, how they whistle!
The steersman is busy —
Hillio-ho, hillio-ho!
We dash through the billows —
They flash far behind us —
Land, land, boys, again!

BLINDMAN'S BUFF.

Oh, my Theresa dear!
Thine eyes I greatly fear
Can through the bandage see!
Although thine eyes are bound,
By thee I'm quickly found,
And wherefore shouldst thou catch but me.

Ere long thou held'st me fast,
With arms around me cast,
  Upon thy breast I fell;
Scarce was thy bandage gone,
When all my joy was flown,
  Thou coldly didst the blind repel.

He groped on every side,
His limbs he sorely tried,
  While scoffs arose all round;
If thou no love wilt give,
In sadness I shall live,
  As if mine eyes remained still bound.

CHRISTEL.

My senses ofttimes are oppressed,
  Oft stagnant is my blood;
But when by Christel's sight I'm blest
  I feel my strength renewed.
I see her here, I see her there,
  And really cannot tell
The manner how, the when, the where,
  The why I love her well.

If with the merest glance I view
  Her black and roguish eyes,
And gaze on her black eyebrows too,
  My spirit upward flies.
Has any one a mouth so sweet,
  Such love-round cheeks as she?
Ah, when the eye her beauties meet,
  It ne'er content can be.

And when in airy German dance
  I clasp her form divine,

So quick we whirl, so quick advance,
What rapture then like mine!
And when she's giddy, and feels warm,
I cradle her, poor thing,
Upon my breast, and in mine arm, —
I'm then a very king!

And when she looks with love of me,
Forgetting all but this,
When pressed against my bosom, she
Exchanges kiss for kiss,
All through my marrow runs a thrill,
Runs e'en my foot along!
I feel so well, I feel so ill,
I feel so weak, so strong!

Would that such moments ne'er would end!
The day ne'er long I find;
Could I the night too with her spend,
E'en then I should not mind.
If she were in mine arms but held,
To quench love's thirst I'd try;
And could my torments not be quell'd,
Upon her breast would die.

SMITTEN.

Through the wood as I was roaming,
There a gentle youth I spied,
Piping sweetly in the gloaming,
Till the rocks around replied,
So la la!

And beside him down he drew me,
Called me fair, and kissed me then.

"Pipe once more!" I said, and through me
Thrill'd his music sweet again.
So la la!

Now my peace is flown, and never
Comes a smile into mine eye,
And within my ears for ever
Rings that music, and I sigh,
So la la!

RESERVATION.

My maiden she proved false to me;
To hate all joys I soon began,
Then to a flowing stream I ran, —
The stream ran past me hastily.

There stood I fixed, in mute despair;
My head swam round as in a dream;
I well-nigh fell into the stream,
And earth seemed with me whirling there.

Sudden I heard a voice that cried —
I had just turned my face from thence —
It was a voice to charm each sense:
"Beware, for deep is yonder tide!"

A thrill my blood pervaded now,
I looked, and saw a beauteous maid; —
I asked her name — 'twas Kate, she said —
"Oh, lovely Kate! how kind art thou!

"From death I have been saved by thee,
'Tis through thee only that I live;
Little 'twere life alone to give,
My joy in life then deign to be!"

And then I told my sorrows o'er,
Her eyes to earth she sweetly threw;
I kissed her, and she kissed me too,
And — then I talked of death no more.

RESOLVE.

On, on across the plains and feel no dread!
Where not the boldest hath
Trod down a path, which thou may'st safely tread,
Make for thyself a path!

Still thou my heart, dear love! It will not break
Though bent awhile it be;
And if it needs must be, that it shall break,
It breaks not, love, with thee.

TREASURE TROVE.

Through the forest idly,
As my steps I bent,
With a free and happy heart,
Singing as I went.

Cowering in the shade I
Did a floweret spy,
Bright as any star in heaven,
Sweet as any eye.

Down to pluck it stooping,
Thus to me it said,
".Wherefore pluck me only
To wither and to fade?"

Up with its roots I dug it,
I bore it as it grew,
And in my garden-plot at home
I planted it anew;

All in a still and shady place,
Beside my home so dear,
And now it thanks me for my pains
And blossoms all the year.

THE MUSES' SON.

[Goethe quotes the beginning of this song in his Autobiography, as expressing the manner in which his poetical effusions used to pour out from him.]

Through field and wood to stray
And pipe my tuneful lay, —
'Tis thus my days are passed;
And all keep tune with me,
And move on in harmony,
And so on, to the last.

To wait I scarce have power
The garden's earliest flower.
The tree's first bloom in spring;
They hail my joyous strain, —
When winter comes again,
Of that sweet dream I sing.

My song sounds far and near,
O'er ice it echoes clear,
Then winter blossoms bright;
And when his blossoms fly,
Fresh raptures meet mine eye,
Upon the well-tilled height.

When 'neath the linden-tree,
Young folks I chance to see,
I set them moving soon;
His nose the dull lad curls,
The formal maiden whirls,
Obedient to my tune.

Wings to the feet ye lend,
O'er hill and vale ye send
The lover far from home;
When shall I, on your breast,
Ye kindly Muses, rest,
And cease at length to roam?

RECIPROCAL INVITATION TO THE DANCE.

THE INDIFFERENT.

COME to the dance with me, come with me, fair one!
Dances a feast-day like this may well crown;
If thou my sweetheart art not, thou canst be so,
But if thou wilt not, we still will dance on.
Come to the dance with me, come with me, fair one!
Dances a feast-day like this may well crown.

THE TENDER.

Loved one, without thee, what then would all feasts be?
Sweet one, without thee, what then were the dance?
If thou my sweetheart wert not, I would dance not,
If thou art still so, all life is one feast,
Loved one, without thee, what then would the feast be?
Sweet one, without thee, what then were the dance?

THE INDIFFERENT.

Let them but love, then, and leave us the dancing!
Languishing love cannot bear the glad dance.

Let us whirl round in the waltz's gay measure,
And let *them* steal to the dim-lighted wood.
Let them but love, then, and leave us the dancing!
Languishing love cannot bear the glad dance.

THE TENDER.

Let them whirl round, then, and leave us to wander!
Wand'ring to love is a heavenly dance.
Cupid, the near one, o'erhears their deriding,
Vengeance takes suddenly, vengeance takes soon.
Let them whirl round, then, and leave us to wander!
Wand'ring to love is a heavenly dance.

LIKE AND LIKE.

A FAIR bell-flower
Sprang up from the ground,
And early its fragrance
It shed all around;
A bee came thither
And sipped from its bell;—
That they for each other
Were made, we see well.

SELF-DECEIT.

MY neighbour's curtain, well I see,
Is moving to and fro.
No doubt she's listening eagerly,
If I'm at home or no,

And if the jealous grudge I bore
And openly confessed;
Is nourished by me as before,
Within my inmost breast.

Alas! no fancies such as these
E'er crossed the dear child's thoughts.
I see 'tis but the evening breeze
That with the curtain sports.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

Oh, would I resembled
The country girls fair,
Who rosy-red ribbons
And yellow hats wear!

To believe I was pretty
I thought was allowed;
In the town I believed it
When by the youth vowed.

Now that spring hath returned,
All my joys disappear;
The girls of the country
Have lured him from here.

To change dress and figure,
Was needful, I found,
My bodice is longer,
My petticoat round.

My hat now is yellow,
My bodice like snow;
The clover to sickle
With others I go.

Something pretty, ere long
Midst the troop he explores;
The eager boy signs me
To go within doors.

I bashfully go, —
Who I am, he can't trace;
He pinches my cheeks,
And he looks in my face.

The town girl now threatens
You maidens with war;
Her twofold charms pledges
Of victory are.

LOVER IN ALL SHAPES.

To be like a fish,
Brisk and quick is my wish;
If thou cam'st with thy line,
Thou wouldst soon make me thine,
To be like a fish,
Brisk and quick is my wish.

Oh, were I a steed!
Thou wouldst love me indeed.
Oh, were I a car
Fit to bear thee afar!
Oh, were I a steed!
Thou wouldst love me indeed.

I would I were gold
That thy finger might hold!
If thou boughtest aught then,
I'd return soon again.
I would I were gold
That thy fingers might hold!

I would I were true,
And my sweetheart still new!
To be faithful I'd swear,
And would go away ne'er.

I would I were true,
And my sweetheart still new!

I would I were old,
And wrinkled and cold,
So that if thou said'st No,
I could stand such a blow!
I would I were old,
And wrinkled and cold.

An ape I would be,
Full of mischievous glee;
If aught came to vex thee,
I'd plague and perplex thee.
An ape I would be,
Full of mischievous glee.

As a lamb I'd behave,
As a lion be brave,
As a lynx clearly see,
As a fox cunning be.
As a lamb I'd behave,
As a lion be brave.

Whatever I were,
All on *thee* I'd confer
With the gifts of a prince
My affection evince.
Whatever I were,
All on *thee* I'd confer.

As nought diff'rent can make me,
As I *am* thou must take me!
If I'm not good enough,
Thou must cut thine own stuff.
As nought diff'rent can make me,
As I *am* thou must take me!

THE GOLDSMITH'S APPRENTICE.

My neighbour, none can e'er deny,
Is a most beauteous maid;
Her shop is ever in mine eye,
When working at my trade.

To ring and chain I hammer then
The wire of gold assayed,
And think the while: "For Kate, oh, when
Will such a ring be made?"

And when she takes her shutters down,
Her shop at once invade,
To buy and haggle, all the town,
For all that's there displayed.

I file, and maybe overfile
The wire of gold assayed,
My master grumbles all the while, —
Her shop the mischief made.

To ply her wheel she straight begins
When not engaged in trade;
I know full well for what she spins, —
'Tis hope guides that dear maid.

Her leg, while her small foot treads on,
Is in my mind portrayed;
Her garter I recall anon, —
I gave it that dear maid.

Then to her lips the finest thread
Is by her hand conveyed.
Were *I* there only in its stead,
How I would kiss the maid!

ANSWERS IN A GAME OF QUESTIONS.

THE LADY.

In the small and great world too,
What most charms a woman's heart?
It is doubtless what is new,
For its blossoms joy impart;
Nobler far is what is true,
For fresh blossoms it can shoot
Even in the time of fruit.

THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

With the nymphs in wood and cave
Paris was acquainted well,
Till Zeus sent, to make him rave,
Three of those in Heaven who dwell;
And the choice more trouble gave
Than e'er fell to mortal lot,
Whether in old times or not.

THE EXPERIENCED.

Tenderly a woman view,
And thou'lt win her, take my word
He who's quick and saucy too,
Will of all men be preferred;
Who ne'er seems as if he knew
If he pleases, if he charms, —
He 'tis injures, he 'tis harms.

THE CONTENTED.

Manifold is human strife,
Human passion, human pain:
Many a blessing yet is rife,
Many pleasures still remain.

Yet the greatest bliss in life,
And the richest prize we find,
Is a good, contented mind.

THE MERRY COUNSEL.

He by whom man's foolish will
Is each day reviewed and blamed,
Who when *others* fools are still,
Is himself a fool proclaimed, —
Ne'er at mill was beast's back pressed
With a heavier load than he.
What I feel within my breast
That in truth's the thing for me!

DIFFERENT EMOTIONS ON THE SAME SPOT.

THE MAIDEN.

I've seen him before me!
What rapture steals o'er me
Oh, heavenly sight!
He's coming to meet me;
Perplexed, I retreat me,
With shame take to flight.
My mind seems to wander!
Ye rocks and trees yonder,
Conceal ye my rapture,
Conceal my delight!

THE YOUTH.

'Tis here I must find her,
'Twas here she enshrined her,
Here vanished from sight.
She came, as to meet me,
Then fearing to greet me,
With shame took to flight.

Is't hope? Do I wander?
Ye rocks and trees yonder,
Disclose ye the loved one,
Disclose my delight!

THE LANGUISHING.

O'er my sad fate I sorrow,
To each dewy morrow,
Veiled here from man's sight.
By the many mistaken,
Unknown and forsaken,
Here wing I my flight!
Compassionate spirit!
Let none ever hear it, —
Conceal my affliction,
Conceal thy delight!

THE HUNTER.

To-day I'm rewarded;
Rich booty's afforded
By Fortune so bright.
My servant, the pheasants,
And hares fit for presents,
Takes homeward at night.
Here see I enraptured
In nets the birds captured! —
Long life to the hunter!
Long live his delight!

THE MISANTHROPE.

At first awhile sits he,
With calm, unruffled brow;
His features then I see,
Distorted hideously, —

An owl's they might be now.
What is it, asketh thou?
Is't love, or is't ennui?
'Tis both at once, I vow.

LATE resounds the early strain;
Weal and woe in song remain.

DIFFERENT THREATS.

I ONCE into a forest far
My maiden went to seek,
And fell upon her neck, when: "Ah!"
She threatened, "I will shriek!"

Then cried I haughtily: "I'll crush
The man that dares come near thee!"
"Hush!" whispered she: "my loved one, hush!
Or else they'll overhear thee!"

WHO'LL BUY CUPID?

OF all the wares so pretty
That come into the city,
There's none are so delicious,
There's none are half so precious,
As those which we are bringing.
Oh, listen to our singing!
Young loves to sell? young loves to sell!
My pretty loves who'll buy?

First look you at the oldest,
The wantonest, the boldest!

So loosely goes he hopping,
From tree and thicket dropping,
Then flies aloft so sprightly!
We dare but praise him lightly!
The fickle rogue! Young loves to sell!
My pretty loves who'll buy?

Now see this little creature —
How modest seems his feature!
He nestles so demurely,
You'd think him safer surely;
And yet for all his shyness,
There's danger in his slyness,
The cunning rogue! Young loves to sell!
My pretty loves who'll buy?

Oh, come and see this lovelet,
This little turtle-dovelet!
The maidens that are neatest,
The tenderest and sweetest,
Should buy it to amuse 'em,
And nurse it in their bosom.
The little pet! Young loves to sell!
My pretty loves who'll buy?

We need not bid you buy them,
They're here, if you will try them.
They like to change their cages;
But for their proving sages
No warrant will we utter —
They all have wings to flutter,
The pretty things! Young loves to sell!
Such beauties! Come and buy!

TRUE ENJOYMENT.

VAINLY wouldst thou, to gain a heart,
Heap up a maiden's lap with gold;
The joys of love thou must impart,
Wouldst thou e'er see those joys unfold.
The voices of the throng gold buys.
No single heart 'twill win for thee;
Wouldst thou a maiden make thy prize,
Thyself alone the bribe must be.

If by no sacred tie thou'rt bound,
Oh, youth, thou must thyself restrain!
Well may true liberty be found,
Though man may seem to wear a chain.
Let one alone inflame thee e'er,
And if her heart with love o'erflows,
Let tenderness unite you there,
If duty's self no fetter knows.

First *feel*, oh, youth! A girl then find
Worthy thy choice, — let *her* choose thee,
In body fair, and fair in mind,
And then thou wilt be blest, like me.
I who have made this art mine own,
A girl have chosen such as this;
The blessing of the priest alone
Is wanting to complete our bliss.

Nought but my rapture is her guide,
Only for me she cares to please, —
Ne'er wanton save when by my side,
And modest when the world she sees.
That time our glow may never chill,
She yields no right through frailty;

Her favour is a favour still,
And I must ever grateful be.

Yet I'm content, and full of joy,
If she'll but grant her smile so sweet,
Or if at table she'll employ,
To pillow hers, her lover's feet;
Give me the apple that she bit,
The glass from which she drank, bestow,
And when my kiss so orders it,
Her bosom, veiled till then, will show.

And when she wills of love to speak,
In fond and silent hours of bliss,
Words from her mouth are all I seek,
Nought else I crave, — not e'en a kiss.
With what a soul her mind is fraught,
Wreathed round with charms unceasingly!
She's perfect, — and she fails in nought
Save in her deigning to love me.

My reverence throws me at her feet,
My longing throws me on her breast;
This, youth, is rapture true and sweet;
Be wise, *thus* seeking to be blest.
When death shall take thee from her side,
To join th' angelic choir above,
In heaven's bright mansions to abide, —
No diff'rence at the change thou'lt prove.

MAIDEN WISHES.

What pleasure to me
A bridegroom would be!
When married we are,
They call us mamma.

No need then to sew,
To school we ne'er go;
Command uncontrolled,
Have maids whom to scold;
Choose clothes at our ease,
Of what tradesmen we please;
Walk freely about,
And go to each rout,
And unrestrained are
By papa or mamma.

THE FAREWELL.

[Probably addressed to his mistress Frederica.]

Let mine eye the farewell say,
That my lips can utter ne'er;
Fain I'd be a man to-day,
Yet 'tis hard, oh, hard to bear!

Mournful in an hour like this
Is love's sweetest pledge, I ween;
Cold upon thy mouth the kiss,
Faint thy fingers' pressure e'en.

Oh, what rapture to my heart
Used each stolen kiss to bring!
As the violets joy impart,
Gathered in the early spring.

Now no garlands I entwine,
Now no roses pluck for thee,
Though 'tis springtime, Fanny mine,
Dreary autumn 'tis to me!

MOTIVES.

If to a girl who loves us truly
Her mother gives instruction duly
In virtue, duty, and what not, —
And if she hearkens ne'er a jot,
But with fresh-strengthened longing flies
To meet our kiss that seems to burn, —
Caprice has just as much concern
As love in her bold enterprise.

But if her mother can succeed
In gaining for her maxims heed,
And softening the girl's heart too,
So that she coyly shuns our view, —
The heart of youth she knows but ill;
For when a maiden is thus stern,
Virtue in truth has less concern
In this, than an inconstant will.

THE LOVELY NIGHT.

From the cot, where softly sleeping
Lies my bosom's love, I go,
And with noiseless footstep creeping,
Thread the dusty wood, when lo!
Bursts the moon through glade and greenwood,
Soft the herald zephyrs play,
And the waving birches sprinkle
Sweetest incense on my way.

How I revel in the coolness
Of this beauteous summer night
Stilly dreaming here the fulness
Of the panting soul's delight!

Words can paint not what my bliss is,
Yet, kind heaven, I'd yield to thee
Nights a thousand, fair as this is,
Would my love give one to me!

LOVE'S DREAM.

Thou oft in dreams hast seen us stand
Before the altar hand in hand,
Thyself the bride, the bridegroom I.
Oft on thy lips, when none were watching,
I've hung, unnumbered kisses snatching,
In hours of waking ecstasy.

The purest rapture that we cherished,
The bliss of hours so golden, perished
Even with the hour that saw it rise.
What reck that mine have been such blisses?
Fleeting as dreams are fondest kisses,
And like a kiss all pleasure dies.

LIVING REMEMBRANCE.

Half vexed, half pleased, thy love will feel,
Shouldst thou her knot or ribbon steal;
To thee they're much — I won't conceal;
Such self-deceit may pardoned be;
A veil, a kerchief, garter, rings,
In truth are no more trifling things,
But still they're not enough for me.

She who is dearest to my heart,
Gave me, with well dissembled smart,
Of her own life a living part,
No charm in aught beside I trace;

How do I scorn thy paltry ware!
A lock she gave me of the hair
That wantons o'er her beauteous face.

If, loved one, we must severed be,
Wouldst thou not wholly fly from me,
I still possess this legacy,
To look at, and to kiss in play, —
My fate is to the hair's allied,
We used to woo her with like pride,
And now we both are far away.

Her charms with equal joy we pressed,
Her smiling cheeks anon caressed,
Lured onward by a yearning blest,
Upon her heaving bosom fell.
Oh, rival, free from envy's sway,
Thou precious gift, thou beauteous prey,
Remain my joy and bliss to tell!

THE BLISS OF ABSENCE.

'Tis sweet for him, the livelong day that lies,
Wrapt in the heaven of his dear lady's eyes,
Whose dreams her image blesseth evermore,
Love knoweth not a sharper joy than this,
Yet greater, purer, nobler is the bliss,
To be afar from her whom we adore!

Distance and Time, eternal powers, that be
Still, like the stars, o'erruling secretly,
Cradle this tempest of the blood to peace.
Calm grows my soul, and calmer every hour,
Yet daily feels my heart a springing power,
And daily finds my happiness increase.

All times she lives within my heart and brain,
Yet can I think of her without a pain,
  My spirit soars away serene and free,
And, by the strength of its divine emotion,
Transforms its love to all a saint's devotion,
  Refines desire into idolatry.

The lightest cloudlet that doth fleck the sky,
And floats along the sunshine airily,
  More lightly in its beauty floateth never,
Than doth my heart, with tranquil joy elate.
By fear untouched, for jealousy too great,
  I love, oh, yes, I love — I love her ever.

TO LUNA.

Sister of the earliest light,
Type of loveliness in sorrow,
Silver mists thy radiance borrow,
Even as they cross thy sight.
When thou comest to the sky,
In their dusky hollows waken,
Spirits that are sad, forsaken,
Birds that shun the day, and I.

Looking downward far and wide,
Hidden things thou dost discover.
Luna! help a hapless lover,
Lift him kindly to thy side!
Aided by thy friendly beams,
Let him, through the lattice peeping,
Look into the room where, sleeping,
Lies the maiden of his dreams.

Ah, I see her! Now I gaze,
Bending in a trance Elysian,

And I strain my inmost vision,
And I gather all thy rays.
Bright and brighter yet I see
Charms no envious robes encumber;
And she draws me to her slumber
As Endymion once drew thee.

THE WEDDING NIGHT.

Within the chamber, far away
From the glad feast, sits love in dread
Lest guests disturb, in wanton play,
The silence of the bridal bed.
His torch's pale flame serves to gild
The scene with mystic sacred glow,
The room with incense-clouds is filled,
That he may perfect rapture know.

How beats thy heart, when thou dost hear
The chimes that warn thy guests to fly?
How glow'st thou for those lips so dear,
That soon are mute, and nought deny!
With her into the holy place
Thou hast'nest then to perfect all;
The fire the warder's hands embrace,
Grows, like a night-light, dim and small.

How heaves the bosom, and how burns
Her face at every fervent kiss!
Her coldness now to trembling turns,
Thy daring now a duty is.
Love helps thee to undress her fast,
But thou art twice as fast as he;
And then he shuts both eyes at last
With sly and roguish modesty.

MISCHIEVOUS JOY.

As a butterfly renewed,
When in life I breathed my last,
To the spots my flight I wing,
Scenes of heavenly rapture past,
Over meadows to the spring,
Round the hill, and through the wood.

Soon a tender pair I spy,
And I look down from my seat
On the beauteous maiden's head —
When embodied there I meet
All I lost as soon as dead,
Happy as before am I.

Him she clasps with silent smile,
And his mouth the hour improves,
Sent by kindly deities;
First from breast to mouth it roves,
Then from mouth to hands it flies,
And I round him sport the while.

And she sees me hov'ring near;
Trembling at her lover's rapture,
Up she springs — I fly away.
"Dearest! let's the insect capture!
Come! I long to make my prey
Yonder pretty little dear!"

NOVEMBER SONG.

To the great archer — not to him
To meet whom flies the sun,
And who is wont his features dim
With clouds to overrun —

But to the boy be vowed these rhymes,
Who 'mongst the roses plays,
Who hears us, and at proper times
To pierce fair hearts essays.

Through him the gloomy winter night,
Of yore so cold and drear,
Brings many a loved friend to our sight,
And many a woman dear.

Henceforward shall his image fair
Stand in yon starry skies,
And, ever mild and gracious there,
Alternate set and rise.

TO THE CHOSEN ONE.

[This sweet song is doubtless one of those addressed to Frederica.]

Hand in hand, and lip to lip!
Oh, be faithful, maiden dear!
Fare thee well! thy lover's ship
Past full many a rock must steer;
But should he the haven see,
When the storm has ceased to break,
And be happy, reft of thee, —
May the gods fierce vengeance take!

Boldly dared is well-nigh won!
Half my task is solved aright;
Every star's to me a sun,
Only cowards deem it night.
Stood I idly by thy side,
Sorrow still would sadden me;
But when seas our path divide,
Gladly toil I, — toil for thee!

Now the valley I perceive,
Where together we will go,
And the streamlet watch each eve,
Gliding peacefully below.
Oh, the poplars on yon spot!
Oh, the beech-trees in yon grove!
And behind we'll build a cot,
Where to taste the joys of love!

FIRST LOSS.

Ah! who'll ever those days restore,
Those bright days of early love!
Who'll one hour again concede,
Of that time so fondly cherished!
Silently my wounds I feed,
And with wailing evermore
Sorrow o'er each joy now perished.
Ah! who'll e'er the days restore
Of that time so fondly cherished!

APPARENT DEATH.

Weep, maiden, weep here o'er the tomb of Love;
He died of nothing — by mere chance was slain.
But is he really dead? — oh, *that* I cannot prove:
A nothing, a mere chance, oft gives him life again.

AFTER-SENSATIONS.

When the vine again is blowing,
Then the wine moves in the cask;
When the rose again is glowing,
Wherefore should I feel oppressed?

Down my cheeks run tears all-burning,
If I do, or leave my task;
I but feel a speechless yearning,
That pervades my inmost breast.

But at length I see the reason,
When the question I would ask:
'Twas in such a beauteous season,
Doris glowed to make me blest!

PRESENCE.

All things give token of thee!
As soon as the bright sun is shining,
Thou too wilt follow, I trust.

When in the garden thou walkest,
Thou then art the rose of all roses,
Lily of lilies as well.

When thou dost move in the dance,
Then each constellation moves also;
With thee and round thee they move.

Night! oh, what bliss were the night!
For then thou o'ershadow'st the lustre,
Dazzling and fair, of the moon.

Dazzling and beauteous art thou,
And flowers, and moon, and the planets
Homage pay, Sun, but to thee.

Sun! to *me* also be thou
Creator of days bright and glorious;
Life and Eternity this!

SEPARATION.

I THINK of thee whene'er the sun is glowing
Upon the lake;
Of thee, when in the crystal fountain flowing
The moonbeams shake.

I see thee when the wanton wind is busy,
And dust-clouds rise;
In the deep night, when o'er the bridge so dizzy
The wanderer hies.

I hear thee when the waves, with hollow roaring,
Gush forth their fill;
Often along the heath I go exploring,
When all is still.

I am with thee! Though far thou art and darkling,
Yet art thou near.
The sun goes down, the stars will soon be sparkling —
Oh, wert thou here.

TO THE DISTANT ONE.

AND have I lost thee evermore,
Hast thou, oh, fair one, from me flown?
Still in mine ear sounds, as of yore,
Thine every word, thine every tone.

As when at morn the wanderer's eye
Attempts to pierce the air in vain,
When, hidden in the azure sky,
The lark high o'er him chants his strain:

So do I cast my troubled gaze
Through bush, through forest, o'er the lea;
Thou art invoked by all my lays;
Oh, come then, loved one, back to me!

BY THE RIVER.

Flow on, ye lays so loved, so fair,
On to Oblivion's ocean flow!
May no rapt boy recall you e'er,
No maiden in her beauty's glow!

My love alone was then your theme,
But now she scorns my passion true.
Ye were but written in the stream;
As it flows on, then flow ye too!

THE EXCHANGE.

The stones in the streamlet I make my bright pillow,
And open my arms to the swift-rolling billow,
That lovingly hastens to fall on my breast.
Then fickleness soon bids it onwards be flowing;
A second draws nigh, its caresses bestowing, —
And so by a twofold enjoyment I'm blest.

And yet thou art trailing in sorrow and sadness
The moments that life, as it flies, gave for gladness,
Because by thy love thou'rt remembered no more!
Oh, call back to mind former days and their blisses!
The lips of the second will give as sweet kisses
As any the lips of the first gave before!

FAREWELL.

To break one's word is pleasure-fraught,
  To do one's duty gives a smart;
While man, alas! will promise nought,
  That is repugnant to his heart.

Using some magic strain of yore,
  Thou lurest him, when scarcely calm,
On to sweet folly's fragile bark once more,
  Renewing, doubling chance of harm.

Why seek to hide thyself from me?
  Fly not my sight — be open then?
Known late or early it must be,
  And here thou hast thy word again.

My duty is fulfilled to-day,
  No longer will I guard thee from surprise;
But, oh, forgive the friend who from thee turns away,
  And to himself for refuge flies!

WELCOME AND DEPARTURE.

[Another of the love-songs addressed to Frederica.]

To horse! — away, o'er hill and steep!
  Into the saddle blithe I sprung;
The eve was cradling earth to sleep,
  And night upon the mountain hung.
With robes of mist around him set,
  The oak like some huge giant stood,
While with its hundred eyes of jet,
  Peered darkness from the tangled wood.

Amidst a bank of clouds, the moon
A sad and troubled glimmer shed;
The wind its chilly wings unclosed,
And whistled wildly round my head.
Night framed a thousand phantoms dire,
Yet did I never droop nor start;
Within my veins what living fire!
What quenchless glow within my heart!

We met; and from thy glance a tide
Of stifling joy flowed into me:
My heart was wholly by thy side,
My every breath was breathed for thee.
A blush was there, as if thy cheek
The gentlest hues of spring had caught,
And smiles so kind for me! — Great powers!
I hoped, yet I deserved them not!

But morning came to end my bliss;
A long, a sad farewell we took;
What joy — what rapture in thy kiss,
What depth of anguish in thy look!
I left thee, sweet! but after me,
Thine eyes through tears looked from above;
Yet to be loved — what ecstasy!
What ecstasy, ye gods, to love!

NEW LOVE, NEW LIFE.

[Written at the time of Goethe's connection with Lili.]

HEART! my heart! what means this feeling?
What oppresseth thee so sore?
What strange life is o'er me stealing!
I acknowledge thee no more,

Fled is all that gave thee gladness,
Fled the cause of all thy sadness,
Fled thy peace, thine industry —
Ah, why suffer it to be?

Say, do beauty's graces youthful,
Does this form so fair and bright,
Does this gaze, so kind, so truthful,
Chain thee with unceasing might?
Would I tear me from her boldly,
Courage take, and fly her coldly,
Back to her I'm forthwith led
By the path I seek to tread.

By a thread I ne'er can sever,
For 'tis 'twined with magic skill,
Doth the cruel maid for ever
Hold me fast against my will.
While those magic charms confine me,
To her will I must resign me.
Ah, the change in truth is great!
Love! kind love! release me straight!

TO BELINDA.

[This song was also written for Lili. Goethe mentions, at the end of his Autobiography, that he overheard her singing it one evening after he had taken his last farewell of her.]

With resistless power why dost thou press me
Into scenes so bright?
Had I not — good youth — so much to bless me
In the lonely night?

In my little chamber close I found me,
In the moon's cold beams;
And there quivering light fell softly round me,
While I lay in dreams.

And by hours of pure unmingled pleasure,
All my dreams were blest,
While I felt her image, as a treasure,
Deep within my breast.

Is it I, she at the table places,
'Mid so many lights?
Yes, to meet intolerable faces,
She her slave invites.

Ah! the Spring's fresh fields no longer cheer me,
Flowers no sweetness bring
Angel, where thou art, all sweets are near me, —
Love, Nature, and Spring.

WITH AN EMBROIDERED RIBBON.

Little flowerets, little leaflets,
Have they woven with fairy hand,
Playful sunny elves of springtide,
Lightly called at my command.

Zephyr, bear it on thy pinions,
Drop it on my darling's dress,
So she'll pass before the mirror
In her double loveliness.

She, of roses still the fairest,
Roses shall around her see;
Give me but one look, my dearest,
And I ask no more of thee.

Feel but what this heart is feeling —
Frankly place thy hand in mine —
Trust me, love, the tie which binds us,
Is no fragile rosy twine.

SECOND LIFE.

After life's departing sigh,
To the spots I loved most dearly,
In the sunshine and the shadow,
By the fountain welling clearly,
Through the wood and o'er the meadow,
Flit I like a butterfly.

There a gentle pair I spy.
Round the maiden's tresses flying,
From her chaplet I discover
All that I had lost in dying,
Still with her and with her lover,
Who so happy then as I?

For she smiles with laughing eyes;
And his lips to her he presses,
Vows of passion interchanging,
Stifling her with sweet caresses,
O'er her budding beauties ranging;
And around the twain I fly.

And she sees me fluttering nigh;
And beneath his ardour trembling,
Starts she up — then off I hover.
"Look there, dearest!" Thus dissembling,
Speaks the maiden to her lover —
"Come and catch that butterfly!"

TO MY MISTRESS.

All that's lovely speaks of thee!
When the glorious sun appeareth,
'Tis thy harbinger to me:
Only thus he cheereth.

In the garden where thou go'st,
  There art thou the rose of roses,
First of lilies, fragrant most
  Of the fragrant posies.

When thou movest in the dance,
  All the stars with thee are moving
And around thee gleam and glance,
  Never tired of loving.

Night! — and would the night were here!
  Yet the moon would lose her duty;
Though her sheen be soft and clear,
  Softer is thy beauty!

Fair, and kind, and gentle one!
  Do not moon, and stars, and flowers
Pay that homage to their sun,
  That we pay to ours?

Sun of mine, that art so dear —
  Sun, that art above all sorrow!
Shine, I pray thee, on me here
  Till the eternal morrow!

FLOWER-SALUTE.

This nosegay, — 'twas *I* dressed it, —
  Greets thee a thousand times!
Oft stooped I, and caressed it,
  Ah! full a thousand times,
And 'gainst my bosom pressed it,
  A hundred thousand times!

WITH A GOLDEN NECKLACE.

Accept, dear maid, this little token,
A supple chain that fain would lie,
And keep its tiny links unbroken
Upon a neck of ivory.

Pray, then, exalt it to this duty,
And change its humbleness to pride;
By day it will adorn your beauty,
By night 'tis quickly laid aside.

But if another hand should proffer
A chain of weightier, closer kind,
Think twice ere you accept the offer;
For there are chains will not unbind.

MAY SONG.

How gloriously gleameth
All nature to me!
How bright the sun beameth,
How fresh is the lea!

White blossoms are bursting
The thickets among,
And all the gay greenwood
Is ringing with song!

There's radiance and rapture
That nought can destroy,
O earth, in thy sunshine,
O heart, in thy joy!

O love! thou enchanter,
So golden and bright —
Like the red clouds of morning
That rest on yon height; —

It is thou that art clothing
The fields and the bowers,
And everywhere breathing
The incense of flowers!

O maiden! dear maiden!
How well I love thee —
Thine eye, how it kindles
In answer to me!

Oh! well the lark loveth
Its song 'midst the blue;
Oh, gladly the flowerets
Expand to the dew.

And so do I love thee;
For all that is best,
I draw from thy beauty
To gladden my breast!

And all my heart's music
Is thrilling for thee!
Be evermore blest, love,
And loving to me!

ON THE LAKE.

[This little poem was composed during a tour in Switzerland in 1775. Several others in this series belong to the same period, being that when Goethe's passion for Anna Elizabeth Schönemann, the Lili of his poems, was at its height.]

And here I drink new blood, fresh food
From world so free, so blest;
How sweet is nature and how good
Who holds me to her breast!

The waves are cradling up our boat,
The oars are beating time;
Mountains we meet that seem afloat
In heav'nly clouds sublime.

Why, my eye, art downward turning?
Golden dreams, are ye returning?
Dream, though gold, I thee repel;
Love and life here also dwell.

'Neath the waves are sinking
Stars from heaven sparkling;
Soft white mists are drinking,
Distance towering, darkling,

Morning wind is fanning
Trees by the bay that root,
And its image scanning
Is the ripening fruit.

FROM THE MOUNTAIN.

[Written just after the preceding one, on a mountain overlooking the Lake of Zurich.]

DEAREST Lili, if I did not love thee,
How transporting were a scene like this!
Yet, my Lili, if I did not love thee,
What were any bliss?

MAY SONG.

BETWEEN wheat-field and corn,
Between hedgerow and thorn,
Between pasture and tree,
Where is my sweetheart?
Tell it me!

Sweetheart caught I
Not at home;
She's then, thought I,
Gone to roam.
Fair and loving
Blooms sweet May,
Sweetheart's roving,
Free and gay.

By the rock near the wave,
Where her first kiss she gave,
On the greensward, to me, —
Something I see!
Is it she?

WITH a master all smoothly goes
Who what he bids, himself well knows.

EARLY SPRING.

Come ye so early,
  Days of delight?
Making the hillside
  Blithesome and bright?

Merrily, merrily,
  Little brooks rush,
Down by the meadow,
  Under the bush.

Welkin and hilltop,
  Azure and cool;
Fishes are sporting
  In streamlet and pool.

Birds of gay feather
  Flit through the grove,
Singing together
  Ditties of love.

Busily coming
  From moss-covered bowers,
Brown bees are humming,
  Questing for flowers.

Lightsome emotion,
  Life everywhere;
Faint wafts of fragrance
  Scenting the air.

Now comes there sounding
  A sough of the breeze,
Shakes through the thicket,
  Sinks in the trees.

Sinks, but returning,
It ruffles my hair;
Aid me this rapture,
Muses, to bear!

Know ye the passion
That stirs in me here?
Yester e'en at gloaming
Was I with my dear!

IN SUMMER.

How plain and height
With dewdrops are bright!
How pearls have crowned
The plants all around!
How sighs the breeze
Through thicket and trees!
How loudly in the sun's clear rays
The sweet birds carol forth their lays!

But, ah! above,
When saw I my love,
Within her room,
Small, mantled in gloom,
Enclosed around,
Where sunlight was drowned,
How little then was earth to me,
With all its beauteous majesty!

AUTUMN FEELINGS.

Flourish greener, as ye clamber,
O ye leaves, to seek my chamber,
Up the trellised vine on high!
May ye swell, twin-berries tender,

Juicier far, — and with more splendour
Ripen, and more speedily!
O'er ye broods the sun at even
As he sinks to rest, and heaven
Softly breathes into your ear
All its fertilising fulness,
While the moon's refreshing coolness,
Magic-laden, hovers near;
And, alas! ye're watered ever
By a stream of tears that rill
From mine eyes, — tears ceasing never,
Tears of love that nought can still!

RESTLESS LOVE.

Through rain, through snow,
Through tempest go!
'Mongst steaming caves,
O'er misty waves,
On, on! still on!
Peace, rest have flown!

Sooner through sadness
I'd wish to be slain,
Than all the gladness
Of life to sustain;
All the fond yearning
That heart feels for heart,
Only seems burning
To make them both smart.

How shall I fly?
Forestwards hie?
Vain were all strife!
Bright crown of life,
Turbulent bliss, —
Love, thou art this!

THE SHEPHERD'S LAMENT.

Up yonder on the mountain,
I dwelt for days together;
Looked down into the valley,
This pleasant summer weather.

My sheep go feeding onward,
My dog sits watching by;
I've wandered to the valley,
And yet I know not why.

The meadow, it is pretty,
With flowers so fair to see;
I gather them, but no one
Will take the flowers from me.

The good tree gives me shadow,
And shelter from the rain:
But yonder door is silent,
It will not ope again!

I see the rainbow bending,
Above her old abode,
But she is there no longer;
They've taken my love abroad.

They took her o'er the mountains,
They took her o'er the sea;
Move on, move on, my bonny sheep,
There is no rest for me!

NIGHT SONG.

When on thy pillow lying,
Half listen, I implore,
And at my lute's soft sighing,
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?

For at my lute's soft sighing
The stars their blessings pour
On feelings never-dying;
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?

Those feelings never-dying
My spirit aid to soar
From earthly conflicts trying;
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?

From earthly conflicts trying
Thou driv'st me to this shore;
Through thee I'm hither flying, —
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?

Through thee I'm hither flying,
Thou wilt not list before
In slumbers thou art lying:
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?

COMFORT IN TEARS.

How is it that thou art so sad
When others are so gay?
Thou hast been weeping — nay, thou hast!
Thine eyes the truth betray.

"And if I may not choose but weep,
Is not my grief mine own?
No heart was heavier yet for tears —
Oh, leave me, friend, alone!"

Come join this once the merry band,
They call aloud for thee,
And mourn no more for what is lost,
But let the past go free.

"Oh, little know ye in your mirth,
What wrings my heart so deep!
I have not lost the idol yet,
For which I sigh and weep."

Then rouse thee and take heart! thy blood
Is young and full of fire;
Youth should have hope and might to win,
And wear its best desire.

"Oh, never may I hope to gain
What dwells from me so far;
It stands as high, it looks as bright,
As yonder burning star."

Why, who would seek to woo the stars
Down from their glorious sphere?
Enough it is to worship them,
When nights are calm and clear.

"Oh, I look up and worship too —
My star it shines by day —
Then let me weep the livelong night
The whilst it is away."

LONGING.

What stirs in my heart so?
What lures me from home?
What forces me outwards,
And onwards to roam?
Far up on the mountains
Lie cloudlets like snow;
Oh, were I but yonder,
'Tis there I must go!

Now by come the ravens
So solemn and black;
I mingle among them,
And follow their track:
By rock and by turret
We silently glide;
Ah, there is the bower, where
My lady doth bide!

She walks in the greenwood,
That beautiful May;
Like a bird singing clearly,
I drop on the spray.
She lists, and she lingers,
And softly says she —
"How sweetly it singeth,
It singeth for me!"

The sunset is gilding
The peaks of the hill,
The day is declining,
Yet tarries she still:
She follows the brooklet
Through meadow and glade,
Till dark is the pathway,
And lost in the shade.

Then, then I come down, as
A swift-shooting star;
"What light glitters yonder,
So near yet so far?"
Ere yet the amazement
Hath passed from thee, sweet,
My quest it is ended,
I lie at thy feet!

THE CASTLE ON THE MOUNTAIN.

THERE stands an ancient castle
On yonder mountain height,
Where, fenced with door and portal,
Once tarried steed and knight.

But gone are door and portal,
And all is hushed and still;
O'er ruined wall and rafter
I clamber as I will.

A cellar with many a vintage
Once lay in yonder nook;
Where now are the cellarer's flagons
And where is his jovial look?

No more he sets the beakers
For the guests at the wassail feast;
Nor fills a flask from the oldest cask
For the duties of the priest.

No more he gives on the staircase
The stoup to the thirsty squires,
And a hurried thanks for the hurried gift
Receives, nor more requires.

For burned are roof and rafter,
And they hang begrimed and black;
And stair, and hall, and chapel,
Are turned to dust and wrack.

Yet, as with song and cittern,
One day when the sun was bright,
I saw my love ascending
The slopes of yon rocky height;

From the hush and desolation
Sweet fancies did unfold,
And it seemed as they had come back again,
The jovial days of old.

As if the stateliest chambers
For noble guests were spread,
And out from the prime of that glorious time
A youth a maiden led.

And, standing in the chapel,
The good old priest did say,
"Will ye wed with one another?"
And we smiled and answered "Yea!"

We sung, and our hearts they bounded
To the thrilling lays we sung,
And every note was doubled
By the echo's catching tongue.

And when, as eve descended,
The hush grew deep and still,
And the setting sun looked upward
On that great castled hill;

Then far and wide, like lord and bride,
In the radiant light we shone —

It sank; and again the ruins
Stood desolate and lone!

TO MIGNON.

Over vale and torrent far
Rolls along the sun's bright car.
Ah! he wakens in his course
Mine, as thy deep-seated smart
In the heart,
Ev'ry morning with new force.

Scarce avails night aught to me;
E'en the visions that I see
Come but in a mournful guise;
And I feel this silent smart
In my heart
With creative power arise.

During many a beauteous year
I have seen ships 'neath me steer,
As they seek the shelt'ring bay;
But, alas, each lasting smart
In my heart
Floats not with the stream away.

I must wear a gala dress,
Long stored up within my press,
For to-day to feasts is given;
None know with what bitter smart
Is my heart
Fearfully and madly riven.

Secretly I weep each tear,
Yet can cheerful e'en appear,

With a face of healthy red;
For if deadly were this smart
In my heart,
Ah, I then had long been dead!

SPIRIT GREETING.

Upon a tower antique and high
Stood ghost of hero brave,
Who, as the ship went sailing by,
This "God-speed" to her gave.

"See! these my sinews stark were once,
This heart beat fast and wild,
Of knightly marrow full these bones,
Brimful this goblet filled.

"Half of my life in storm was passed,
Half wasted was in ease,
Speed, human cargo, far and fast,
On, on, before the breeze!"

TO A GOLDEN HEART HE WAS WEARING ON HIS NECK.

[Addressed, during the Swiss tour already mentioned, to a present Lili had given him during the time of their happy connection, which was then about to be terminated for ever.]

Thou, of joy that died away, the token
Which as yet I on my neck am wearing,
Longer hold'st us twain, thou mental tie that's broken?
Art thou the length of love's short days repairing?

Flee I, Lili, from thee! Must still, tied to thy fetter,
Like unto a debtor,
Roam in strange lands, through vales and forests darting!
Ah! not so soon could this my heart from
My Lili's heart be parting.

Like a bird that erst did break his string,
And to the wood returns,
He drags of his prison the disgrace,
Still some bit of the string on his trace;
No longer the old bird, once born with freedom's wing;
Has been a slave where'er he turns.

WANDERER'S NIGHT-SONG.

Thou that from the heavens art,
Every pain and sorrow stillest,
And the doubly wretched heart
Doubly with refreshment fillest,
I am weary with contending!
Why this rapture and unrest?
Peace descending,
Come, ah, come into my breast!

O'er all the hilltops
Is quiet now,
In all the tree-tops
Hearest thou
Hardly a breath;
The birds are asleep in the trees:
Wait; soon like these
Thou, too, shalt rest.

ILM, THE RIVER, TO THE MOON.

Fillest hill and vale again,
Still with softening light!
Loosest from the world's cold chain
All my soul to-night!

Spreadest round me far and nigh,
Soothingly, thy smile;
From thee, as from friendship's eye,
Sorrow shrinks the while.

Every echo thrills my heart, —
Glad and gloomy mood,
Joy and sorrow both have part
In my solitude.

River, river, glide along!
I am sad, alas!
Fleeting things are love and song, —
Even so they pass.

I have had and I have lost
What I long for yet;
Ah! why will we, to our cost,
Simple joys forget?

River, river, glide along,
Without stop or stay!
Murmur, whisper to my song
In melodious play.

Whether on a winter's night
Rise thy swelling floods,
Or in spring thou hast delight
Watering the young buds.

Happy he who, hating none,
Leaves the world's dull noise,
And, with trusty friends alone,
Quietly enjoys

What, for ever unexpressed,
Hid from common sight,
Through the mazes of the breast
Softly steals by night!

HUNTSMAN'S EVENING SONG.

In silence sad, from heath to hill
With rifle slung I glide.
But thy dear shape, it haunts me still,
It hovers by my side.

Across the brook, and past the mill,
I watch thee gaily fleet;
Ah, does one shape, that ne'er is still,
E'er cross thy fancy, sweet?

'Tis his, who, tortured by unrest,
Roams ever to and fro,
Now ranging east, now ranging west,
Since forced from thee to go.

And yet at times the thought of thee,
Like moonlight in a dream,
Doth bring, I know not how, to me
Content and peace supreme.

EVENING.

[Written at night on the *Kickelhahn*, a hill in the forest of Ilmenau, on the walls of a little hermitage where Goethe composed the last act of his "Iphigenia."]

PEACE breathes along the shade
Of every hill,
The tree-tops of the glade
Are hushed and still;
All woodland murmurs cease,
The birds to rest within the brake are gone.
Be patient, weary heart — anon,
Thou, too, shalt be at peace!

TO LINA.

LINA, rival of the linnet,
When these lays shall reach thy hand,
Please transfer them to the spinnet,
Where thy friend was wont to stand.

Set the diapason ringing,
Ponder not the words you see,
Give them utterance by thy singing,
Then each leaf belongs to thee.

With the life of music fill them;
Cold the written verses seem,
That, would Lina deign to trill them,
Might be trancing as a dream.

EVER AND EVERYWHERE.

Far explore the mountain hollow,
High in air the clouds then follow!
To each brook and vale the Muse
Thousand times her call renews.

Soon as flow'ret blooms in spring,
It wakens many a strain;
And when Time spreads his fleeting wing
The seasons come again.

DELIGHT OF SORROW.

Dry not up, dry not up,
Tears shed by love everlasting!
Ah! to the eye that half only dried is,
How dreary, how dead the world does appear!
Dry not up, dry not up,
Tears my love unhappy is shedding!

PROXIMITY.

I know not wherefore, dearest love,
Thou often art so strange and coy!
When 'mongst man's busy haunts we move,
Thy coldness puts to flight my joy.
But soon as night and silence round us reign,
I know thee by thy kisses sweet again!

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

I DO not envy you, ye joyless stars,
Though fair ye be, and glorious to the sight —
The seaman's hope amidst the 'whelming storm,
When help from God or man there cometh none.
No! for ye love not, nor have ever loved!
Through the broad fields of heaven, the eternal hours
Lead on your circling spheres unceasingly.
How vast a journey have ye travelled o'er,
Since I, upon the bosom of my love,
Forgot all memory of night or you!

PETITION.

OH, thou sweet maiden fair,
Thou with the raven hair,
  Why to the window go?
  While gazing down below,
Art standing vainly there?
Oh, if thou stood'st for me,
  And lett'st the latch but fly,
How happy should I be!
  How soon would I leap high!

TO HIS COY ONE.

SEEST thou yon smiling orange?
Upon the tree still hangs it;
Already March hath vanished,
And new-born flowers are shooting.
I draw nigh to the tree then,
And there I say: O orange,

Thou ripe and juicy orange,
Thou sweet and luscious orange,
I shake the tree, I shake it,
Oh, fall into my lap.

ROLLICKING HANS.

Hallo there! A glass!
Ha! the draught's truly sweet!
If for drink go on my shoes,
I shall still have my feet.

A maiden and wine,
With sweet music and song,—
I would they were mine,
All life's journey along!

If I depart from this sad sphere,
And leave a will behind me here,
A suit at law will be preferred,
But as for thanks,— the deuce a word!
So ere I die, I squander all,
And that's a proper will I call.

HIS COMRADE.

Hallo there! A glass!
Ha! the draught's truly sweet!
If thou keepest thy shoes,
Thou wilt then spare thy feet.

A maiden and wine,
With sweet music and song,
On payment, are thine,
All life's journey along!

TO LIDA.

THE only one whom, Lida, thou canst love,
Thou claim'st, and rightly claim'st, for only thee;
He, too, is wholly thine; since doomed to rove
Far from thee, in life's turmoils nought I see
Save a thin veil, through which thy form I view,
As though in clouds; with kindly smile and true,
It cheers me, like the stars eterne that gleam
Across the northern lights' far-flick'ring beam.

RECIPROCAL.

MY mistress, where sits she?
What is it that charms?
The absent she's rocking,
Held fast in her arms.

In pretty cage prisoned
She holds a bird still;
Yet lets him fly from her,
Whenever he will.

He pecks at her finger,
And pecks at her lips,
And hovers and flutters,
And round her he skips.

Then hasten thou homeward,
In fashion to be;
If thou hast the maiden,
She also hath thee.

THE FREEBOOTER.

No door has my house,
No house has my door;
And in and out ever
I carry my store.

No grate has my kitchen,
No kitchen my grate;
Yet roasts it and boils it
Both early and late.

My bed has no trestles,
My trestles no bed;
Yet merrier moments
No mortal e'er led.

My cellar is lofty,
My barn is full deep,
From top to the bottom, —
There lie I and sleep.

And soon as I waken,
All moves on its race;
My place has no fixture,
My fixture no place.

JOY AND SORROW.

As fisher-boy I fared
To the black rock in the sea,
And, while false gifts I prepared,
Listened and sang merrily,

Down descended the decoy,
Soon a fish attacked the bait;
One exulting shout of joy, —
And the fish was captured straight.

Ah! on shore, and to the wood,
Past the cliffs, o'er stock and stone,
One foot's traces I pursued,
And the maiden was alone.
Lips were silent, eyes downcast
As a clasp-knife snaps the bait,
With her snare she seized me fast,
And the boy was captured straight.

Heaven knows who's the happy swain
That she rambles with anew!
I must dare the sea again,
Spite of wind and weather, too.
When the great and little fish
Wail and flounder in my net,
Straight returns my eager wish
In her arms to revel yet!

MARCH.

The snowflakes fall in showers,
The time is absent still,
When all Spring's beauteous flowers,
When all Spring's beauteous flowers
Our hearts with joy shall fill.

With lustre false and fleeting
The sun's bright rays are thrown;
The swallow's self is cheating,
The swallow's self is cheating;
And why? He comes alone!

Can I e'er feel delighted
  Alone, though Spring is near?
Yet when we are united,
Yet when we are united,
  The summer will be here.

APRIL.

Tell me, eyes, what 'tis ye're seeking;
  For ye're saying something sweet,
  Fit the ravished ear to greet,
Eloquently, softly speaking.

Yet I see now why ye're roving;
  For behind those eyes so bright,
  To itself abandoned quite,
Lies a bosom, truthful, loving, —

One that it must fill with pleasure
  'Mongst so many, dull and blind,
  One true look at length to find,
That its worth can rightly treasure.

Whilst I'm lost in studying ever
  To explain these ciphers duly, —
  To unravel *my* books truly
In return be your endeavour!

MAY.

Light and silv'ry cloudlets hover
  In the air, as yet scarce warm;
Mild, with glimmer soft tinged over,
  Peeps the sun through fragrant balm.

Gently rolls and heaves the ocean
As its waves the bank o'erflow,
And with ever restless motion
Moves the verdure to and fro,
Mirrored brightly far below.

What is now the foliage moving?
Air is still, and hush'd the breeze,
Sultriness, this fulness loving,
Through the thicket, from the trees.
Now the eye at once gleams brightly,
See! the infant band with mirth
Moves and dances nimbly, lightly,
As the morning gave it birth,
Flutt'ring two and two o'er earth.

JUNE.

She behind yon mountain lives,
Who my love's sweet guerdon gives.
Tell me, mount, how this can be,
Very glass thou seem'st to me!
And I seem to be close by,
For I see her drawing nigh;
Now, because I'm absent, sad,
Now, because she sees me, glad.

Soon between us rise to sight
Valleys cool, with bushes light,
Streams and meadows; next appear
Mills and wheels, the surest token
That a level spot is near,
Plains far-stretching and unbroken.
And so onwards, onwards roam,
To my garden and my home!

But how comes it then to pass?
All this gives no joy, alas!—
I was ravished by her sight,
By her eyes so fair and bright,
By her footstep soft and light.
How her peerless charms I praised,
When from head to foot I gazed!
I am here, she's far away,—
I am gone, with her to stay.

If on rugged hills she wander,
If she haste the vale along,
Pinions seem to flutter yonder,
And the air is filled with song;
With the glow of youth still playing
Joyous vigour in each limb,
One in silence is delaying,
She alone 'tis blesses him.

Love, thou art too fair, I ween!
Fairer I have never seen!
From the heart full easily
Blooming flowers are culled by thee.
If I think: "Oh, were it so,"
Bone and marrow seem to glow!
If rewarded by her love,
Can I greater rapture prove?

And still fairer is the bride,
When in me she will confide,
When she speaks and lets me know
All her tale of joy and woe.
All her lifetime's history
Now is fully known to me.
Who in child or woman e'er
Soul and body found so fair?

NEXT YEAR'S SPRING.

The bed of flowers
Loosens amain,
The beauteous snowdrops
Drop o'er the plain.
The crocus opens
Its glowing bud,
Like emeralds others,
Others, like blood.
With saucy gesture
Primroses flare,
And roguish violets
Hidden with care;
And whatsoever
There stirs and strives,
The Spring's contented,
It works and thrives.

'Mongst all the blossoms
That fairest are,
My sweetheart's sweetness
Is sweetest far;
Upon me ever
Her glances light,
My song they waken
My words make bright.
An ever open
And blooming mind,
In sport, unsullied,
In earnest, kind.
Though roses and lilies
By summer are brought,
Against my sweetheart
Prevails he nought.

SWISS SONG.

Up in the mountain
I was a-sitting,
With the bird there
As my guest,
Blithely singing,
Blithely springing,
And building
His nest.

In the garden
I was a-standing,
And the bee there
Saw as well,
Buzzing, humming,
Going, coming,
And building
His cell.

O'er the meadow
I was a-going,
And there saw the
Butterflies,
Sipping, dancing,
Flying, glancing,
And charming
The eyes.

And then came my
Dear Hansel,
And I showed them
With glee,
Sipping, quaffing,
And he, laughing,
Sweet kisses
Gave me.

SICILIAN SONG.

Ye black and roguish eyes,
If ye command,
Each house in ruin lies,
No town can stand.
And shall my bosom's chain, —
This plaster wall, —
To think one moment, deign, —
Shall *it* not fall?

AT MIDNIGHT HOUR.

[Goethe relates that a remarkable situation he was in one bright moonlight night led to the composition of this sweet song, which was "the dearer to him because he could not say whence it came and whither it would."]

At midnight hour I went, not willingly,
A little, little boy, yon churchyard past,
To Father Vicar's house; the stars on high
On all around their beauteous radiance cast,
At midnight hour.

And when, in journeying o'er the path of life,
My love I followed, as she onward moved,
With stars and northern lights o'erhead in strife,
Going and coming, perfect bliss I proved
At midnight hour.

Until at length the full moon, lustre-fraught,
Burst thro' the gloom wherein she was enshrined;
And then the willing, active, rapid thought
Around the past, as round the future twined,
At midnight hour.

TO THE RISING FULL MOON.

Dornburg, 25th August, 1828.

WILT thou suddenly enshroud thee,
Who this moment wert so nigh?
Heavy rising masses cloud thee,
Thou art hidden from mine eye.

Yet my sadness thou well knowest,
Gleaming sweetly as a star!
That I'm loved, 'tis *thou* that showest,
Though my loved one may be far.

Upward mount then! clearer, milder,
Robed in splendour far more bright!
Though my heart with grief throbs wilder,
Fraught with rapture is the night!

THE BRIDEGROOM.[1]

I SLEPT, — 'twas midnight, — in my bosom woke,
As though 'twere day, my love-o'erflowing heart;
To me it seemed like night, when day first broke;
What is't to me, whate'er it may impart?

She was away; the world's unceasing strife
For her alone I suffered through the heat
Of sultry day; oh, what refreshing life
At cooling eve! — my guerdon was complete.

The sun now set, and wand'ring hand in hand,
His last and blissful look we greeted then;
While spake our eyes, as they each other scanned:
"From the far east, let's trust, he'll come again!"

[1] Not in the English sense of the word, but the German, where it has the meaning of *betrothed*.

At midnight! — the bright stars, in vision blest,
Guide to the threshold where she slumbers calm;
Oh, be it mine, there too at length to rest, —
Yet howsoe'er this prove, life's full of charm!

SUCH, SUCH IS HE WHO PLEASETH ME.

Fly, dearest, fly! He is not nigh!
He who found thee one fair morn in Spring
In the wood where thou thy flight didst wing.
Fly, dearest, fly! He is not nigh!
Never rests the foot of evil spy.

Hark! flutes' sweet strains and love's refrains
Reach the loved one, borne there by the wind,
In the soft heart open doors they find.
Hark! flutes' sweet strains and love's refrains,
Hark! — yet blissful love their echo pains.

Erect his head, and firm his tread,
Raven hair around his smooth brow strays,
On his cheeks a spring eternal plays.
Erect his head, and firm his tread,
And by grace his ev'ry step is led.

Happy his breast, with pureness blessed,
And the dark eyes 'neath his eyebrows placed,
With full many a beauteous line are graced.
Happy his breast, with pureness blessed,
Soon as seen, thy love must be confessed.

His mouth is red — its power I dread,
On his lips morn's fragrant incense lies,
Round his lips the cooling zephyr sighs.
His mouth is red — its power I dread,
With one glance from him, all sorrow's fled.

His blood is true, his heart bold too,
In his soft arms, strength, protection, dwells,
And his face with noble pity swells.
His blood is true, his heart bold too,
Blest the one whom those dear arms may woo!

GIPSY SONG.

In the drizzling mist, with the snow high-piled,
In the winter night, in the forest wild,
I heard the wolves with their ravenous howl,
I heard the screaming note of the owl:
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

I shot, one day, a cat in the ditch —
The dear black cat of Anna the witch;
Upon me, at night, seven were-wolves came down,
Seven women they were, from out of the town.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

I knew them all; ay, I knew them straight;
First, Anna, then Ursula, Eve, and Kate,
And Barbara, Lizzy, and Bet as well:
And forming a ring, they began to yell:
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

Then called I their names with angry threat:
"What wouldst thou, Anna? What wouldst thou, Bet?"

At hearing my voice, themselves they shook,
And howling and yelling, to flight they took.
Wille wau wau wau!
Wille wo wo wo!
Wito hu!

THE DESTRUCTION OF MAGDEBURG.

[For a fine account of the fearful sack of Magdeburg, by Tilly, in the year 1631, see Schiller's "History of the Thirty Years' War."]

Oh, Magdeburg, the town!
Fair maids thy beauty crown,
Thy charms fair maids and matrons crown;
Oh, Magdeburg, the town!

Where all so blooming stands,
Advance fierce Tilly's bands;
O'er gardens and o'er well-tilled lands
Advance fierce Tilly's bands.

Now Tilly's at the gate.
Our homes who'll liberate?
Go, loved one, hasten to the gate,
And dare the combat straight!

There is no need as yet,
However fierce his threat;
Thy rosy cheeks I'll kiss, sweet pet!
There is no need as yet.

My longing makes me pale.
Oh, what can wealth avail?
E'en now thy father may be pale.
Thou makest my courage fail.

Oh, mother, give me bread!
Is then my father dead?
Oh, mother, one small crust of bread!
Oh! what misfortune dread!

Thy father, dead lies he,
The trembling townsmen flee,
Adown the street the blood runs free;
Oh, whither shall we flee?

The churches ruined lie,
The houses burn on high,
The roofs they smoke, the flames out fly,
Into the street then hie!

No safety there they meet!
The soldiers fill the street,
With fire and sword the wreck complete:
No safety there they meet!

Down falls the houses' line,
Where now is thine or mine?
That bundle yonder is not thine,
Thou flying maiden mine!

The women sorrow sore,
The maidens far, far more.
The living are no virgins more.
Thus Tilly's troops make war!

FINNISH SONG.

If the loved one, the well-known one,
Should return as he departed,
On his lips would ring my kisses,
Though the wolf's blood might have dyed them;
And a hearty grasp I'd give him,
Though his finger-ends were serpents.

Wind! Oh, if thou hadst but reason,
Word for word in turns thou'dst carry,
E'en though some perchance might perish
'Tween two lovers so far distant.

All choice morsels I'd dispense with,
Table-flesh of priests neglect, too,
Sooner than renounce my lover,
Whom, in summer having vanquished,
I in winter tamed still longer.

DEPRESSION.

Roses, ah, how fair ye be!
Ye are fading, dying!
Ye should with my lady be,
On her bosom lying;
All your bloom is lost on me,
Here despairing, sighing.

Oh, the golden dreams I nursed,
Ere I knew thy scorning,
When I poured my passion first,
And at break of morning,
Plucked the rosebuds ere they burst
For thy breast's adorning!

Every fruit and floweret rare,
To thy feet I bore it,
Fondly knelt, to see thee there
Bending fondly o'er it,
Gazing on thy face so fair,
To revere, adore it.

Roses, ah! how fair ye be!
Ye are fading, dying!
Ye should with my lady be,
On her bosom lying;
All your bloom is lost on me,
Here despairing, sighing.

SORROW WITHOUT CONSOLATION.

Oh, wherefore shouldst thou try
The tears of love to dry?
Nay, let them flow!
For didst thou only know,
How barren and how dead
Seems everything below,
To those who have not tears enough to shed,
Thou'dst rather bid them weep, and seek their comfort so.

THE PARTING.

Let mine eyes the farewell make thee
Which my lips refuse to speak;
Scorn me not, if to forsake thee
Makes my very manhood weak.

Joyless in our joy's eclipse, love,
Are love's tokens, else divine,
Cold the kisses of thy lips, love,
Damp the hand that's locked in mine.

Once thy lip, to touch it only,
To my soul has sent a thrill,
Sweeter than the violet lonely,
Plucked in March-time by the rill.

Garlands never more I'll fashion,
Roses twine no more for thee;
Spring is here, but, ah, my passion,
Autumn dark has come for me!

ON THE NEW YEAR.

[Composed for a merry party that used to meet, in 1802, at Goethe's house.]

FATE now allows us,
'Twixt the departing
And the upstarting,
Happy to be;
And at the call of
Memory cherished,
Future and perished
Moments we see.

Seasons of anguish, —
Ah, they must ever
Truth from woe sever,
Love and joy part;
Days still more worthy
Soon will unite us,
Fairer songs light us,
Strength'ning the heart.

We, thus united,
Think of, with gladness,
Rapture and sadness,
Sorrow now flies.
Oh, how mysterious
Fortune's direction!
Old the connection,
New-born the prize!

Thank, for this, Fortune,
  Wavering blindly!
  Thank all that kindly
Fate may bestow!
Revel in change's
  Impulses clearer,
  Love far sincerer,
More heartfelt glow.

Over the old one,
  Wrinkles collected,
  Sad and dejected,
Others may view;
But, on *us* gently
  Shineth a true one,
  And to the new one
We, too, are new.

As a fond couple
  'Midst the dance veering,
  First disappearing,
Then reappear,
So let affliction
  Guide thro' life's mazy
  Pathways so hazy
Into the year.

ANNIVERSARY SONG.

[This little song describes the different members of the party just spoken of.]

Why pacest thou, my neighbour fair,
  The garden all alone?
If house and land thou seek'st to guard,
  I'd thee as mistress own.

My brother sought the cellar-maid,
And suffered her no rest;
She gave him a refreshing draught,
A kiss, too, she impressed.

My cousin is a prudent wight,
The cook's by him adored;
He turns the spit round ceaselessly,
To gain love's sweet reward.

We six together then began
A banquet to consume,
When lo! a fourth pair singing came,
And danced into the room.

Welcome were they, — and welcome, too,
Was a fifth jovial pair,
Brimful of news, and stored with tales
And jests both new and rare.

For riddles, spirit, raillery,
And wit, a place remained;
A sixth pair then our circle joined,
And so that prize was gained.

And yet, to make us truly blest,
One missed we, and full sore;
A true and tender couple came, —
We needed then no more.

The social banquet now goes on,
Unchequered by alloy;
The sacred double-numbers then
Let all at once enjoy!

THE SPRING ORACLE.

Oh, prophetic bird so bright,
Blossom-songster, cuckoo hight!
In the fairest time of year,
Dearest bird, oh! deign to hear
What a youthful pair would pray;
Do thou call, if hope they may;
Thy cuck-oo, thy cuck-oo,
Ever more cuck-oo, cuck-oo!

Hearest thou? A loving pair
Fain would to the altar fare;
Yes! a pair in happy youth,
Full of virtue, full of truth.
Is the hour not fixed by fate?
Say, how long must they still wait?
Hark! cuck-oo! hark! cuck-oo!
Silent yet! for shame, cuck-oo!

'Tis not our fault, certainly!
Only two years patient be!
But if we ourselves please here,
Will pa-pa-papas appear?
Know that thou'lt more kindness do us,
More thou'lt prophesy unto us.
One! cuck-oo! Two! cuck-oo!
Ever, ever, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, coo!

If we've calculated clearly,
We have half a dozen nearly.
If good promises we'll give,
Wilt thou say how long we'll live?
Truly, we'll confess to thee,
We'd prolong it willingly.

Coo, cuck-oo, coo, cuck-oo!
Coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo!

Life is one continued feast —
(If we keep no score, at least).
If now we together dwell,
Will true love remain as well?
For if *that* should e'er decay,
Happiness would pass away.
Coo, cuck-oo, coo, cuck-oo,
Coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo!

(Gracefully *in infinitum.*)

THE HAPPY COUPLE.

After these vernal rains
That we so warmly sought,
Dear wife, see how our plains
With blessings sweet are fraught!
We cast our distant gaze
Far in the misty blue;
Here gentle love still strays,
Here dwells still rapture true.

Thou see'st whither go
Yon pair of pigeons white,
Where swelling violets blow
Round sunny foliage bright.
'Twas there we gathered first
A nosegay as we roved;
There into flame first burst
The passion that we proved.

Yet when, with plighted troth,
The priest beheld us fare,

Home from the altar both,
With many a youthful pair, —
Then other moons had birth,
And many a beauteous sun,
Then we had gained the earth
Whereon life's race to run.

A hundred thousand fold
The mighty bond was sealed;
In woods, on mountains cold,
In bushes, in the field,
Within the wall, in caves,
And on the craggy height,
And love, e'en o'er the waves,
Bore in his tube the light.

Contented we remained,
We deemed ourselves a pair;
'Twas otherwise ordained,
For, lo! a third was there;
A fourth, fifth, sixth appeared,
And sat around our board;
And now the plants we've reared
High o'er our heads have soared.

How fair and pleasant looks,
On yonder beauteous spot,
Embraced by poplar-brooks,
The newly finished cot!
Who is it there that sits
In that glad home above?
Is't not our darling Fritz
With his own darling love?

Beside yon precipice,
Whence pent-up waters steal,

And, leaving the abyss,
Fall foaming through the wheel, —
Though people often tell
Of millers' wives so fair,
Yet none can e'er excel
Our dearest daughter there!

Yet where the thick-set green
Stands round yon church and sod,
Where the old fir-tree's seen
Alone tow'rd heaven to nod, —
'Tis there the ashes lie
Of our untimely dead;
From earth our gaze on high
By their blest memory's led.

See how yon hill is bright
With billowy-waving arms!
The force returns, whose might
Has vanquished war's alarms.
Who proudly hastens here
With wreath-encircled brow?
'Tis like our child so dear! —
Thus Charles comes homeward now.

That dearest honoured guest
Is welcomed by the bride;
She makes the true one blest,
At the glad festal tide.
And every one makes haste
To join the dance with glee;
While thou with wreaths hast graced
The youngest children three.

To sound of flute and horn
The time appears renewed,

When we, in love's young morn,
In the glad dance upstood;
And perfect bliss I know
Ere the year's course is run,
For to the font we go
With grandson and with son!

SONG OF FELLOWSHIP.

[Written and sung in honour of the birthday of the Pastor Ewald, at the time of Goethe's happy connection with Lili.]

In every hour of joy
That love and wine prolong,
The moments we'll employ
To carol forth this song!
We're gathered in His name,
Whose power hath brought us here.
He kindled first our flame,
He bids it burn more clear.

Then gladly glow to-night,
And let our hearts combine!
Up! quaff with fresh delight
This glass of sparkling wine!
Up! hail the joyous hour,
And let your kiss be true;
With each new bond of power
The old becomes the new!

Who in our circle lives,
And is not happy there?
True liberty it gives,
And brother's love so fair.

Thus heart and heart through life
With mutual love are filled;
And by no causeless strife
Our union is e'er chilled.

Our hopes a God has crowned
With life-discernment free,
And all we view around,
Renews our ecstasy.
Ne'er by caprice oppressed,
Our bliss is ne'er destroyed;
More freely throbs our breast,
By fancies ne'er alloyed.

Where'er our foot we set,
The more life's path extends,
And brighter, brighter yet
Our gaze on high ascends.
We know no grief or pain,
Though all things fall and rise;
Long may we thus remain!
Eternal be our ties!

CONSTANCY IN CHANGE.

Could this early bliss but rest
Constant for one single hour!
But e'en now the humid west
Scatters many a vernal shower.
Should the verdure give me joy?
'Tis to it I owe the shade;
Soon will storms its bloom destroy,
Soon will Autumn bid it fade.

Eagerly thy portion seize,
If thou wouldst possess the fruit!
Fast begin to ripen these,
And the rest already to shoot.
With each heavy storm of rain
Change comes o'er thy valley fair;
Once, alas! but not again
Can the same stream hold thee e'er.

And thyself, what erst at least
Firm as rocks appeared to rise,
Walls and palaces thou seest
But with ever-changing eyes.
Fled for ever now the lip
That with kisses used to glow,
And the foot, that used to skip
O'er the mountain, like the roe.

And the hand, so true and warm,
Ever raised in charity,
And the cunning-fashioned form, —
All are now changed utterly.
And what used to bear thy name
When upon yon spot it stood,
Like a rolling billow came,
Hastening on to join the flood.

Be then the beginning found
With the end in unison,
Swifter than the forms around
Are themselves now fleeting on!
Thank the merit in thy breast,
Thank the mould within thy heart,
That the Muses' favour blest
Ne'er will perish, ne'er depart.

TABLE SONG.

[Composed for the merry party already mentioned, on the occasion of the departure for France of the hereditary prince, who was one of the number, and who is especially alluded to in the third verse.]

O'ER me, — how I cannot say, —
Heavenly rapture's growing.
Will it help to guide my way
To yon stars all-glowing?
Yet that here I'd sooner be,
To assert I'm able,
Where, with wine and harmony,
I may thump the table.

Wonder not, my dearest friends,
What 'tis gives me pleasure;
For of all that earth e'er lends,
'Tis the sweetest treasure.
Therefore solemnly I swear,
With no reservation,
That maliciously I'll ne'er
Leave my present station.

Now that here we're gathered round,
Chasing cares and slumbers,
Let, methought, the goblet sound
To the bard's glad numbers!
Many a hundred mile away,
Go those we love dearly;
Therefore let us here to-day
Make the glass ring clearly!

Here's *His* health through whom we live!
I that faith inherit.

To our king the next toast give,
Honour is *his* merit,
'Gainst each in and outward foe
He's our rock and tower.
Of his maintenance thinks he though,
More that grows his power.

Next to *her* good health I drink,
Who has stirred my passion;
Of his mistress let each think,
Think in knightly fashion.
If the beauteous maid but see
Whom 'tis I now call so,
Let her smiling nod to me:
"Here's my love's health also."

To those friends, — the two or three, —
Be our next toast given,
In whose presence revel we,
In the silent even, —
Who the gloomy mist so cold
Scatter gently, lightly;
To those friends, then, new or old,
Let the toast ring brightly.

Broader now the stream rolls on,
With its waves more swelling,
While in higher, nobler tone,
Comrades, we are dwelling, —
We who with collected might
Bravely cling together,
Both in fortune's sunshine bright,
And in stormy weather.

Just as we are gathered thus,
Others are collected;

On them, therefore, as on us,
Be Fate's smile directed!
From the spring-head to the sea,
Many a mill's revolving,
And the world's prosperity
Is the task I'm solving.

WONT AND DONE.

I HAVE loved; for the first time with passion I rave!
I then was the servant, but now am the slave;
I then was the servant of all:
By this creature so charming I now am fast bound,
To love and love's guerdon she turns all around,
And her my sole mistress I call.

I've had faith; for the first time my faith is now strong!
And though matters go strangely, though matters go wrong,
To the ranks of the faithful I'm true:
Though ofttimes 'twas dark, and though ofttimes 'twas drear,
In the pressure of need, and when danger was near,
Yet the dawning of light I now view.

I have eaten; but ne'er have thus relished my food!
For when glad are the senses and joyous the blood,
At table all else is effaced:
As for youth, it but swallows, then whistles an air;
As for me, to a jovial resort I'd repair,
Where to eat and enjoy what I'd taste.

I have drunk; but have never thus relished the bowl!
For wine makes us lords, and enlivens the soul,
And loosens the trembling slave's tongue.

Let's seek not to spare then the heart-stirring drink,
For though in the barrel the old wine may sink,
In its place will fast mellow the young.

I have danced, and to dancing am pledged by a vow!
Though no caper or waltz may be raved about now,
In a dance that's becoming, whirl round.
And he who a nosegay of flowers has dressed,
And cares not for one any more than the rest,
With a garland of love is aye crowned.

Then once more be merry, and banish all woes!
For he who but gathers the blossoming rose,
By its thorns will be tickled alone.
To-day still, as yesterday, glimmers the star;
Take care from all heads that hang down to keep far,
And make but the future thine own.

VANITAS, VANITATUM VANITAS.

On nothing have I set my heart,
Hurrah!
So in the world I bear my part,
Hurrah!
And whoso will be friend of mine
Must join with me, and not decline
To clink a glass of wine.

I set my heart on goods and wealth,
Hurrah!
I lost thereby my nerves and health,
Hurrah!
The coins they rolled off far and wide,
And what with one hand I did hide,
In t'other would not bide.

On woman next I set my heart,
Hurrah!
From them I suffered many a smart,
Ah, ah!
The false one sought another lord,
With the true one I was greatly bored,
The best could not afford.

To travel next I did apply,
Hurrah!
From house and kindred off did fly,
Ah, ah!
I'm pleased with nothing I have seen, —
The food was coarse, the bed not clean,
None knew what I did mean.

On honours next my heart I set,
Hurrah!
But lo! my neighbour more did get,
Ah, ah!
And when I had advanced my name
The folks did look askance, and blame
As though I hurt their fame.

I set my heart on fighting then,
Hurrah!
And many a battle we did gain,
Ah, ah!
We marched the foeman's country through,
Much profit there did not accrue, —
My leg's loss there I rue.

Now I have set my heart on nought,
Hurrah!
The whole world to my feet is brought,
Ah, ah!

My song and feast to end I'm fain,
So every one your glasses drain, —
Let not a drop remain!

FORTUNE OF WAR.

Nought more accursed in war I know
Than getting off scot-free;
Inured to danger, on we go
In constant victory;
We first unpack, then pack again,
With only this reward,
That when we're marching, we complain,
And when in camp are bored.

The time for billeting comes next, —
The peasant curses it;
Each nobleman is sorely vexed,
'Tis hated by the cit.
Be civil, bad though be thy food,
The clowns politely treat;
If to our hosts we're ever rude,
Jail-bread we're forced to eat.

And when the cannon growl around,
And small arms rattle clear,
And trumpet, trot, and drums resound,
We merry all appear;
And as it in the fight may chance,
We yield, then charge amain,
And now retire, and now advance,
And yet a cross ne'er gain.

At length there comes a musket-ball,
And hits the leg, please heaven;

And then our troubles vanish all,
For to the town we're driven,
(Well covered by the victor's force),
Where we in wrath first came, —
The women, frightened then, of course,
Are loving now and tame.

Cellar and heart are opened wide,
The cook's allowed no rest:
While beds with softest down supplied
Are by our members pressed.
The nimble lads upon us wait,
No sleep the hostess takes;
Her shift is torn in pieces straight, —
What wondrous lint it makes!

If one has tended carefully
The hero's wounded limb,
Her neighbour cannot rest, for she
Has also tended him.
A third arrives in equal haste,
At length they all are there,
And in the middle he is placed
Of the whole band so fair!

On good authority the king
Hears how we love the fight,
And bids them cross and ribbon bring,
Our coat and breast to dight.
Say if a better fate can e'er
A son of Mars pursue!
'Midst tears at length we go from there,
Beloved and honoured, too.

COPTIC SONG.

Howe'er they may wrangle, your pundits and sages,
And love of contention infects all the breed,
All the philosophers, search through all ages,
Join with one voice in the following creed:
Fools from their folly 'tis hopeless to stay!
Mules will be mules, by the law of their mulishness;
Then be advised, and leave fools to their foolishness,
What from an ass can you get but a bray?

When Merlin I questioned, the old necromancer,
As halo'd with light in his coffin he lay,
I got from the wizard a similar answer,
And thus ran the burden of what he did say:
Fools from their folly 'tis hopeless to stay!
Mules will be mules, by the law of their mulishness;
Then be advised, and leave fools to their foolishness,
What from an ass can be got but a bray?

And up on the wind-swept peaks of Armenia,
And down in the depths, far hid from the day,
Of the temples of Egypt and far Abyssinia
This, and but this, was the gospel alway:
Fools from their folly 'tis hopeless to stay!
Mules will be mules, by the law of their mulishness;
Then be advised, and leave fools to their foolishness,
What from an ass can be got but a bray?

ANOTHER.

Go! obedient to my call,
Turn to profit thy young days,
Wiser make betimes thy breast!

In Fate's balance as it sways,
Seldom is the cock at rest;
Thou must either mount, or fall,
Thou must either rule and win,
Or submissively give in,
Triumph, or else yield to clamour,
Be the anvil or the hammer.

OPEN TABLE.

Many a guest I'd see to-day,
Met to taste my dishes!
Food in plenty is prepared,
Birds, and game, and fishes.
Invitations all have had,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?

Pretty girls I hope to see,
Dear and guileless misses,
Ignorant how sweet it is
Giving tender kisses.
Invitations all have had,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?

Women also I expect,
Loving toward their spouses,
Whose rude grumbling in their breasts
Greater love but rouses.
Invitations they've had, too,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?

I've too asked young gentlemen,
Who are far from haughty,
And whose purses are all well-stocked,
Well behaved, not naughty.
These especially I asked,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?

Men I summoned with respect,
Who their own wives treasure;
Who in ogling *other* Fair
Never take a pleasure.
To my greetings they replied,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?

Then to make our joy complete,
Poets I invited,
Who love *others'* songs far more
Than what *they've* indited.
All acceded to my wish,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?

Not a single one appears,
None seem this way posting.
All the soup boils fast away,
Joints are over-roasting.
Ah, I fear that we have been
Rather too unbending!
Johnny, tell me what you think!
None are hither wending.

Johnny, run, and quickly bring
Other guests to me now!
Each arriving as he is —
That's the plan, I see now.
In the town at once 'tis known
Every one's commending.
Johnny, open all the doors:
All are hither wending.

THE RECKONING.

LEADER.

Let no cares now hover o'er us!
Let the wine unsparing run!
Wilt thou swell our merry chorus?
Hast thou all thy duty done?

SOLO.

Two young folks — the thing is curious —
Loved each other; yesterday
Both quite mild, to-day quite furious,
Next day, quite the deuce to pay!
If her neck she there was stooping,
He must *here* needs pull his hair.
I revived their spirits drooping,
And they're now a happy pair.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!
Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish
Thou to-day in joy hast drowned.

SOLO.

Why, young orphan, all this wailing?
"Would to heaven that I were dead!
For my guardian's craft prevailing
Soon will make me beg my bread."
Knowing well the rascal genus,
Into court I dragged the knave;
Fair the judges were between us,
And the maiden's wealth did save.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!
Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish
Thou to-day in joy hast drowned.

SOLO.

To a little fellow, quiet,
Unpretending and subdued,
Has a big clown, running riot,
Been to-day extremely rude.
I bethought me of my duty,
And my courage swelled apace,
So I spoiled the rascal's beauty,
Slashing him across the face.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!
Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish
Thou to-day in joy hast drowned.

SOLO.

Brief must be my explanation,
For I really have done nought.

Free from trouble and vexation,
I a landlord's business bought.
There I've done with all due ardour
All that duty ordered me;
Each one asked me for the larder,
And there was no scarcity.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!
Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish
Thou to-day in joy hast drowned.

LEADER.

Each should thus make proclamation
Of what he did well to-day!
That's the match whose conflagration
Should inflame our tuneful lay.
Let it be our precept ever
To admit no waverer here!
For to act the good endeavour,
None but rascals meek appear.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!
Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish
We have now in rapture drowned.

TRIO.

Let each merry minstrel enter,
He's right welcome to our hall!
'Tis but with the self-tormentor
That we are not liberal;

For we fear that his caprices,
That his eyebrows dark and sad,
That his grief that never ceases
Hide an empty heart, or bad.

CHORUS.

No one now for wine shall languish!
Here no minstrel shall be found,
Who all sighs and groans of anguish
Has not first in rapture drowned!

MIGNON.

[This universally known poem is also to be found in "Wilhelm Meister."]

"KNOWEST thou the land where citron-apples bloom,
And oranges like gold in leafy gloom,
A gentle wind from deep blue heaven blows,
The myrtle thick, and high the laurel grows?
Knowest thou it then?
'Tis there! 'Tis there!
O my true loved one, thou with me must go!

"Knowest thou the house, its porch with pillars tall,
The rooms do glitter, glitters bright the hall,
And marble statues stand, and look each one:
What's this, poor child, to thee they've done?
Knowest thou it then?
'Tis there! 'Tis there!
O my protector, thou with me must go!

"Knowest thou the hill, the bridge that hangs on clouds,
The mules in mist grope o'er the torrent loud,

In caves lay coiled the dragon's ancient hood,
The crag leaps down, and over it the flood:
Knowest thou it then?
'Tis there! 'Tis there!
Our way runs; O my father, wilt thou go?"

GENERAL CONFESSION.

In this noble ring to-day
Let my warning shame ye!
Listen to my solemn voice,—
Seldom does it name ye.
Many a thing have ye intended,
Many a thing have badly ended,
And now I must blame ye.

At some moment in our lives
We must all repent us!
So confess, with pious trust,
All your sins momentous!
Error's crooked pathways shunning,
Let us, on the straight road running,
Honestly content us!

Yes! we've oft, when waking, dreamed
Let's confess it rightly;
Left undrained the brimming cup,
When it sparkled brightly;
Many a shepherd's-hour's soft blisses,
Many a dear mouth's flying kisses
We've neglected lightly.

Mute and silent have we sat,
Whilst the blockheads prated,

And above e'en song divine
Have their babblings rated;
To account we've even called us
For the moments that enthralled us
With enjoyment freighted.

If thou'lt absolution grant
To thy true ones ever,
We, to execute thy will,
Ceaseless will endeavour,
From half-measures strive to wean us,
Wholly, fairly, well demean us,
Resting, flagging never.

At all blockheads we'll at once
Let our laugh ring clearly,
And the pearly-foaming wine
Never sip at merely.
Ne'er with eye alone give kisses,
But with boldness suck in blisses
From those lips loved dearly.

ERGO BIBAMUS!

For a praiseworthy object we're now gathered here,
So, brethren, sing: Ergo bibamus!
Tho' talk may be hushed, yet the glasses ring clear,
Remember then, Ergo bibamus!
In truth 'tis an old, 'tis an excellent word,
With its sound so befitting each bosom is stirred,
And an echo the festal hall filling is heard,
A glorious Ergo bibamus!

I saw mine own love in her beauty so rare,
And bethought me of: Ergo bibamus;

So I gently approached, and she let me stand there,
While I helped myself, thinking: BIBAMUS!
And when she's appeared, and will clasp you and kiss,
Or when those embraces and kisses ye miss,
Take refuge, till found is some worthier bliss,
In the comforting ERGO BIBAMUS!

I am called by my fate far away from each friend;
Ye loved ones, then: ERGO BIBAMUS!
With wallet light-laden from hence I must wend,
So double our ERGO BIBAMUS!
Whate'er to his treasure the niggard may add,
Yet regard for the joyous will ever be had,
For gladness lends ever its charms to the glad,
So, brethren, sing: ERGO BIBAMUS!

And what shall we say of to-day as it flies?
I thought but of: ERGO BIBAMUS!
'Tis one of those truly that seldom arise,
So again and again sing: BIBAMUS!
For joy through a wide-open portal it guides,
Bright glitter the clouds as the curtain divides,
And a form, a divine one, to greet us in glides,
While we thunder our: ERGO BIBAMUS.

THE MINSTREL.

[This fine poem is introduced in the second book of "Wilhelm Meister."]

"WHAT tuneful strains salute mine ear
Without the castle walls?
Oh, let the song reëcho here,
Within our festal halls!"

Thus spake the king, the page out-hied;
The boy returned; the monarch cried:
"Admit the old man yonder!"

"All hail, ye noble lords to-night!
All hail, ye beauteous dames!
Star placed by star! What heavenly sight!
Who e'er can tell their names?
Within this glittering hall sublime,
Be closed mine eyes! 'tis not the time
For me to feast my wonder."

The minstrel straightway closed his eyes,
And woke a thrilling tone;
The knights looked on in knightly guise,
Fair looks toward earth were thrown.
The monarch, ravished by the strain,
Bade them bring forth a golden chain,
To be his numbers' guerdon.

"The golden chain give not to me,
But give the chain to those
In whose bold face we shivered see
The lances of our foes.
Or give it to thy chancellor there;
With other burdens he may bear
This one more golden burden.

"I sing, like birds of blithesome note,
That in the branches dwell;
The song that rises from the throat
Repays the minstrel well.
One boon I'd crave, if not too bold —
One bumper in a cup of gold
Be as my guerdon given."

The bowl he raised, the bowl he quaffed:
"Oh, drink, with solace fraught!
O house thrice-blest, where such a draught
A trifling gift is thought!
When Fortune smiles, remember me,
And as I thank you heartily,
As warmly thank ye, Heaven!"

EPIPHANIAS.

THE three holy kings with their star's bright ray, —
They eat and they drink, but had rather not pay;
They like to eat and drink away,
They eat and drink, but had rather not pay.

The three holy kings have all come here,
In numbers not four, but three they appear;
And if a fourth joined the other three,
Increased by one their number would be.

The first am I, — the fair and the white,
I ought to be seen when the sun shines bright.
But, alas! with all my spices and myrrh,
No girl now likes me, — I please not her.

The next am I, — the brown and the long,
Known well to women, known well to song,
Instead of spices, 'tis gold I bear,
And so I'm welcome everywhere.

The last am I, — the black and small,
And fain would be right merry withal.
I like to eat and to drink full measure,
I eat and drink, and give thanks with pleasure.

The three holy kings are friendly and mild,
They seek the Mother, and seek the Child;
The pious Joseph is sitting by,
The ox and the ass on their litter lie.

We're bringing gold, we're bringing myrrh,
The women incense always prefer;
And if we have wine of a worthy growth,
We three to drink like six are not loth.

As here we see fair lads and lasses,
But not a sign of oxen or asses,
We know that we have gone astray,
And so go further on our way.

BALLAD

OF THE EXILED AND RETURNING COUNT.

[Goethe began to write an opera called "Löwenstuhl," founded upon the old tradition which forms the subject of this ballad, but he never carried out his design.]

Come in, dear old man, come inside, do come on!
Down here in the hall we shall be quite alone,
And the gate we will lock altogether.
For, mother is praying, and father is gone
To shoot the wild wolves on the heather.
Oh! sing us a tale, then again and again,
That my brother and I learn the measure;
To hear a fine minstrel we shall be so fain,
The children will listen with pleasure.

"In terror of night, during hostile attack,
On house full of splendour he's turning his back,
His most precious things he did bury.

The wicket to open the count is not slack;
What, then, in his arms does he carry?
What, under his mantle may hidden he keep?
What bears he to distance, what treasure?
His daughter it is, there the child is asleep" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

"The morning is breaking, the world is so wide,
In valleys and mountains does shelter abide,
The villagers kindness are showing;
A minstrel, thus long he must wander and stride,
His beard long and longer is growing;
But lovely grows also the child on his arm,
As though he of wealth had rich measure;
His mantle protects her from every harm" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

"And time many years in its course onward drags,
The mantle is faded, it has fallen to rags,
It could her not hold any longer.
The father beholds her, his joy never flags,
Each day it grows stronger and stronger.
So noble, so beautiful she does appear,
He deems her beyond ev'ry treasure;
How rich she is making her father so dear!" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

"Up rides a princely and chivalrous knight,
She reaches her hand out, an alms to invite;
It is not such gift he would grant her.
The tender hand grasping with full, manly might:
'For life,' he exclaimed, 'I do want her!'
'Wilt make her a princess?' the old man replied,
'Dost recognise her as thy treasure?
Then be she betrothed on this verdant hillside!'" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

"The priest, in the holy place, blesses the pair,
With joy and with grief she now hence doth repair.
She likes not to part with her father.
The old man is wand'ring now here and now there,
From pain he doth happiness gather.
Thus have I for years kept my daughter in sight,
My grandchild, like her, a sweet treasure;
I bless them by day and I bless them by night" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

He blesses the children, he blesses them twice;
There's noise at the gate, it is burst in a trice,
The children the old man environ —
"Why, beggar, why, fool, doth my children entice?
On, seize him, ye men clad in iron!
Away to the dungeon with him!" he repeats;
From far as she hears the harsh measure,
Down hastens the mother, and flatt'ring entreats —
The children, they hear her with pleasure.

The men stand apart from the worthy old man,
Both mother and children beseech all they can;
The princely and proud man represses
The furious rage which their prayers but fan,
Till bursts what his spirit distresses:
"You beggarly brood, high nobility's blight!
My patience you've tried beyond measure;
You bring me destruction! It serves me quite right" —
The children hear this with displeasure.

The noble old man stands with look darting fire,
The men who have seized him still farther retire,
With fury the other is flaring!
"Oft cursed have I wedlock so mean and so dire,
Such blossoms such fruits e'er are bearing!
'Tis justly denied, that *acquired* be, the grace
E'er can, of nobility's treasure.

The beggar has borne me a beggarly race" —
The children still list with displeasure.

"And if thus the husband, the father rejects
You, rashly the most sacred ties disconnects,
You'll find in your grandsire a father!
The beggar your father so little respects
Will honour and wealth for you gather.
This castle is mine! Thou didst rob me of it;
I know where I've hid ev'ry treasure;
I bear with me warrant by royal hand writ!" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

"Legitimate king has returned to his land,
Gives back what was taken from true followers' band,
Laws gentle and mild is proclaiming."
The old man thus spoke with a look kind and bland,
"My son, thee no longer I'm blaming;
Return to thyself from thy fury's wild flood,
I'll loosen the seals of each treasure,
Thy princess has borne thee a true princely blood" —
The children are list'ning with pleasure.

THE FAITHLESS BOY.

THERE was a wooer blithe and gay, —
A son of France was he, —
Who in his arms for many a day,
As though his bride were she,
A poor young maiden had caressed,
And fondly kissed, and fondly pressed,
And then at length deserted.

When this was told the nut-brown maid,
Her senses straightway fled;

She laughed and wept, and vowed and prayed,
And presently was dead.
The hour her soul its farewell took,
The boy was sad, with terror shook,
Then sprang upon his charger.

He drove his spurs into his side,
And scoured the country round;
But wheresoever he might ride,
No rest for him was found.
For seven long days and nights he rode,
It stormed, the waters overflowed,
It blustered, lightened, thundered.

On rode he through the tempest's din,
Till he a building spied;
In search of shelter crept he in,
When he his steed had tied.
And as he groped his doubtful way,
The ground began to rock and sway,—
He fell a hundred fathoms.

When he recovered from his blow,
He saw three lights pass by;
He sought in their pursuit to go,
The lights appeared to fly.
They led his footsteps all astray,
Up, down, through many a narrow way
Through ruined desert cellars.

When lo! he stood within a hall,
A hundred guests sat there,
With hollow eyes, and grinning all;
They bade him taste the fare.

He saw his sweetheart 'midst the throng,
Wrapped up in grave-clothes white and long;
She turned, and ——[1]

THE ERL-KING.

Who rides there so late through the night dark and drear?
The father it is, with his infant so dear;
He holdeth the boy tightly clasped in his arm,
He holdeth him safely, he keepeth him warm.

"My son, wherefore seek'st thou thy face thus to hide?"
"Look, father, the Erl-King is close by our side!
Dost see not the Erl-King, with crown and with train?"
"My son, 'tis the mist rising over the plain."

"Oh, come, thou dear infant! oh, come thou with me!
Full many a game I will play there with thee;
On my strand, lovely flowers their blossoms unfold,
My mother shall grace thee with garments of gold."

"My father, my father, and dost thou not hear
The words that the Erl-King now breathes in mine ear?"
"Be calm, dearest child, 'tis thy fancy deceives;
'Tis the sad wind that sighs through the withering leaves."

"Wilt go, then, dear infant, wilt go with me there?
My daughters shall tend thee with sisterly care;

[1] This ballad is introduced in Act II. of "Claudine of Villa Bella," where it is suddenly broken off, as it is here.

My daughters by night their glad festival keep,
They'll dance thee, and rock thee, and sing thee to sleep."

"My father, my father, and dost thou not see,
How the Erl-King his daughters has brought here for me?"
"My darling, my darling, I see it aright,
'Tis the aged gray willows deceiving thy sight."

"I love thee, I'm charmed by thy beauty, dear boy!
And if thou'rt unwilling, then force I'll employ."
"My father, my father, he seizes me fast,
Full sorely the Erl-King has hurt me at last."

The father now gallops, with terror half wild,
He grasps in his arms the poor shuddering child:
He reaches his courtyard with toil and with dread, —
The child in his arms finds he motionless, dead.

JOHANNA SEBUS.

[To the memory of an excellent and beautiful girl of seventeen, belonging to the village of Brienen, who perished on the 13th of January, 1809, whilst giving help on the occasion of the breaking up of the ice on the Rhine, and the bursting of the dam of Claverham.]

THE DAM BREAKS DOWN, THE ICE-PLAIN GROWLS,
THE FLOODS ARISE, THE WATER HOWLS.
"I'll bear thee, mother, across the swell,
'Tis not yet high, I can wade right well."
"Remember us, too! in what danger are we!
Thy fellow lodger and children three!
The trembling woman! — Thou'rt going away!"
She bears the mother across the spray.

"Quick! haste to the mound, and awhile there wait,
I'll soon return, and all will be straight.
The mound's close by, and safe from the wet;
But take my goat, too, my darling pet!"

THE DAM DISSOLVES, THE ICE-PLAIN GROWLS,
THE FLOODS DASH ON, THE WATER HOWLS.
She places the mother safe on the shore;
Fair Susan then turns toward the flood once more.
"Oh, whither? Oh, whither? The breadth fast grows,
Both here and there the water o'erflows.
Wilt venture, thou rash one, the billows to brave?"
"THEY SHALL, AND THEY MUST BE PRESERVED FROM THE WAVE!"

THE DAM DISAPPEARS, THE WATER GROWLS,
LIKE OCEAN BILLOWS IT HEAVES AND HOWLS.
Fair Susan returns by the way she had tried,
The waves roar around, but she turns not aside;
She reaches the mound and the neighbour straight,
But for her and the children, alas, too late!

THE DAM DISAPPEARED, — LIKE A SEA IT GROWLS,
ROUND A HILLOCK IN CIRCLING EDDIES IT HOWLS.
The foaming abyss gapes wide, and whirls round,
The women and children are borne to the ground;
The horn of the goat by one is seized fast,
But, ah, they all must perish at last!
Fair Susan still stands there, untouched by the wave!
The youngest, the noblest, oh, who now will save!
Fair Susan still stands there, as bright as a star,
But, alas! all hope, all assistance is far.
The foaming waters around her roar.
To save her no bark pushes off from the shore.
Her gaze once again she lifts up to heaven,
Then gently away by the flood she is driven.

No dam, no plain! to mark the place
Some straggling trees are the only trace.
The rushing water the wilderness covers,
Yet Susan's image still over it hovers. —
The water sinks, the plains reappear.
Fair Susan's lamented with many a tear, —
May he who refuses her story to tell,
Be neglected in life and in death as well!

THE VIOLET.

Upon the mead a violet stood,
Retiring, and of modest mood,
In truth, a violet fair.
Then came a youthful shepherdess,
And roamed with sprightly joyousness,
And blithely wooed
With carols sweet the air.

"Ah!" thought the violet, "had I been
For but the smallest moment e'en
Nature's most beauteous flower,
Till gathered by my love, and pressed,
When weary, 'gainst her gentle breast,
For e'en, for e'en
One quarter of an hour!"

Alas! alas! the maid drew nigh,
The violet failed to meet her eye,
She crushed the violet sweet.
It sank and died, yet murmured not:
"And if I die, oh, happy lot,
For her I die,
And at her very feet!"

THE BEAUTEOUS FLOWER.

SONG OF THE IMPRISONED COUNT.

COUNT.

I KNOW a flower of beauty rare,
Ah, how I hold it dear!
To seek it I would fain repair,
Were I not prisoned here.
My sorrow sore oppresses me,
For when I was at liberty,
I had it close beside me.

Though from this castle's walls so steep
I cast mine eyes around,
And gaze oft from the lofty keep,
The flower cannot be found.
Whoe'er would bring it to my sight,
Whether a vassal he, or knight,
My dearest friend I'd deem him.

THE ROSE.

I blossom fair, — thy tale of woes
I hear from 'neath thy grate.
Thou doubtless meanest me, the rose,
Poor knight of high estate!
Thou hast in truth a lofty mind;
The queen of flowers then is enshrined,
I doubt not, in thy bosom.

COUNT.

Thy red, in dress of green arrayed,
As worth all praise I hold;

And so thou'rt treasured by each maid,
Like precious stones or gold.
Thy wreath adorns the fairest face,
But still thou'rt not the flower whose grace
I honour here in silence.

THE LILY.

The rose is wont with pride to swell,
And ever seeks to rise;
But gentle sweethearts love full well
The lily's charms to prize.
The heart that fills a bosom true,
That is, like me, unsullied, too,
My merit values duly.

COUNT.

In truth, I hope myself unstained,
And free from grievous crime;
Yet I am here a prisoner chained,
And pass in grief my time.
To me thou art an image sure
Of many a maiden, mild and pure,
And yet I know a dearer.

THE PINK.

That must be me, the pink, who scent
The warder's garden here.
Or wherefore is he so intent
My charms with care to rear?
My petals stand in beauteous ring,
Sweet incense all around I fling,
And boast a thousand colours.

COUNT.

The pink, in truth, we should not slight,
It is the gardener's pride;
It now must stand exposed to light,
Now in the shade abide.
Yet what can make the Count's heart glow
Is no mere pomp of outward show;
It is a silent flower.

THE VIOLET.

Here stand I, modestly half hid,
And fain would silence keep;
Yet since to speak I now am bid,
I'll break my silence deep.
If, worthy Knight, I am that flower,
It grieves me that I have not power
To breathe forth all my sweetness.

COUNT.

The violet's charms I prize, indeed,
So modest 'tis, and fair,
And smells so sweet; yet more I need
To ease my heavy care.
The truth I'll whisper in thine ear:
Upon these rocky heights so drear,
I cannot find the loved one.

The truest maiden 'neath the sky
Roams near the stream below,
And breathes forth many a gentle sigh,
Till I from hence can go.
And when she plucks a floweret blue,
And says "Forget-me-not!" — I, too,
Though far away, can feel it.

Ay, distance only swells love's might,
When fondly love a pair;
Though prisoned in the dungeon's night,
In life I linger there;
And when my heart is breaking nigh,
"Forget-me-not!" is all I cry,
And straightway life returneth.

SIR CURT'S WEDDING JOURNEY.

With a bridegroom's joyous bearing,
Mounts Sir Curt his noble beast,
To his mistress' home repairing,
There to hold his wedding feast;
When a threatening foe advances
From a desert, rocky spot;
For the fray they couch their lances,
Not delaying, speaking not.

Long the doubtful fight continues,
Victory then for Curt declares;
Conqueror, though with wearied sinews,
Forward on his road he fares.
When he sees, though strange it may be,
Something 'midst the foliage move;
'Tis a mother with her baby,
Stealing softly through the grove!

And upon the spot she beckons —
"Wherefore, love, this speed so wild?
Of the wealth thy storehouse reckons,
Hast thou nought to give thy child?"
Flames of rapture now dart through him,
And he longs for nothing more,
While the mother seemeth to him
Lovely as the maid of yore.

But he hears his servants blowing,
And bethinks him of his bride;
And ere long, while onward going,
Chances past a fair to ride;
In the booths he forthwith buys him
For his mistress many a pledge;
But, alas! some Jews surprise him,
And long-standing debts allege.

And the courts of justice duly
Send the knight to prison straight.
Oh, accursèd story, truly!
For a hero, what a fate!
Can my patience such things weather?
Great is my perplexity.
Women, debts, and foes together, —
Ah, no knight escapes scot free!

WEDDING SONG.

THE tale of the Count our glad song shall record
Who had in this castle his dwelling,
Where now are ye feasting the new-married lord,
His grandson of whom we are telling.
The Count as Crusader had blazoned his fame,
Through many a triumph exalted his name,
And when on his steed to his dwelling he came,
His castle still reared its proud head,
But servants and wealth had all fled.

'Tis true that thou, Count, hast returned to thy home,
But matters are faring there ill.
The winds through the chambers at liberty roam,
And blow through the windows at will.

What's best to be done in a cold autumn night?
Full many I've passed in more piteous plight;
The morn ever settles the matter aright.
Then quick, while the moon shines so clear,
To bed on straw, without fear.

And whilst in a soft pleasing slumber he lay,
A motion he feels 'neath his bed.
The rat, an he likes it, may rattle away!
Ay, had he but crumbs there outspread!
But lo! there appears a diminutive wight,
A dwarf 'tis, yet graceful, and bearing a light,
With orator-gestures that notice invite,
At the feet of the Count on the floor
Who sleeps not, though weary full sore.

"We've long been accustomed to hold here our feast
Since thou from thy castle first went;
And as we believed thou wert far in the East,
To revel e'en now we were bent.
And if thou'lt allow it, and seek not to chide,
We dwarfs will all banquet with pleasure and pride,
To honour the wealthy, the beautiful bride" —
Says the Count with a smile, half asleep: —
"Ye're welcome your quarters to keep!"

Three knights then advance, riding all in a group,
Who under the bed were concealed;
And then is a singing and noise-making troop
Of strange little figures revealed;
And wagon on wagon with all kinds of things —
The clatter they cause through the ear loudly rings —
The like ne'er was seen save in castles of kings;
At length, in a chariot of gold,
The bride and the guest, too, behold!

Then all at full gallop make haste to advance,
Each chooses his place in the hall;
With whirling and waltzing, and light joyous dance,
They begin with their sweethearts the ball.
The fife and the fiddle all merrily sound,
They twine, and they glide, and with nimbleness bound,
They whisper, and chatter, and clatter around;
The Count on the scene casts his eye,
And seems in a fever to lie.

They hustle, and bustle, and rattle away
On table, on bench, and on stool;
Then all who had joined in the festival gay
With their partners attempt to grow cool.
The hams and the sausages nimbly they bear,
And meat, fish, and poultry in plenty are there,
Surrounded with wine of the vintage most rare:
And when they have revelled full long,
They vanish at last with a song.

. . . . . .

And if we're to sing all that further occurred,
Pray cease ye to bluster and prate;
For what he so gladly in *small* saw and heard,
He enjoyed and he practised in *great.*
For trumpets, and singing, and shouts without end
On the bridal-train, chariots and horsemen attend,
They come and appear, and they bow and they bend,
In merry and countless array,
Thus was it, thus is it to-day.

THE FISHERMAN.

The water rushed, the water swelled,
A fisherman sat by,
And gazed upon his dancing float
With tranquil-dreaming eye.
And as he sits, and as he looks,
The gurgling waves arise;
A maid, all bright with water drops,
Stands straight before his eyes.

She sang to him, she spake to him:
"My fish why dost thou snare,
With human wit and human guile,
Into the killing air?
Couldst see how happy fishes live
Under the stream so clear,
Thyself would plunge into the stream,
And live for ever there.

"Bathe not the lovely sun and moon
Within the cool, deep sea,
And with wave-breathing faces rise
In twofold witchery?
Lure not the misty heaven-deeps,
So beautiful and blue?
Lures not thine image, mirrored in
The fresh eternal dew?"

The water rushed, the water swelled,
It clasped his feet, I wis;
A thrill went through his yearning heart,
As when two lovers kiss!
She spake to him, she sang to him:
Resistless was her strain;
Half drew him in, half lured him in;
He ne'er was seen again.

" Half drew him in, half lured him in "

Photogravure from the painting by A. Ring

THE RAT-CATCHER.

I AM the bard known far and wide,
The travelled rat-catcher beside ;
A man most needful to this town,
So glorious through its old renown.
However many rats I see,
How many weasels there may be,
I cleanse the place from every one,
All needs but helter-skelter run.

Sometimes the bard so full of cheer
As a child-catcher will appear,
Who e'en the wildest captive brings,
Whene'er his golden tales he sings.
However proud each boy in heart,
However much the maidens start,
I bid the chords sweet music make,
And all must follow in my wake.

Sometimes the skilful bard ye view
In form of maiden-catcher, too ;
For he no city enters e'er,
Without effecting wonders there.
However coy may be each maid,
Howe'er the women seem afraid,
Yet all will love-sick be ere long
To sound of magic lute and song.
[*Da Capo.*]

THE KING OF THULE.

[This ballad is also introduced in "Faust," where it is sung by Margaret.]

THERE was a king in Thule,
Was faithful till the grave,
To whom his mistress, dying,
A golden goblet gave.

Nought was to him more precious;
He drained it at every bout;
His eyes with tears ran over,
As oft as he drank thereout.

When came his time of dying,
The towns in his land he told,
Nought else to his heir denying
Except the goblet of gold.

He sat at the royal banquet
With his knights of high degree,
In the lofty hall of his father
In the castle by the sea.

There stood the old carouser,
And drank the last life-glow;
And hurled the hallowed goblet
Into the tide below.

He saw it plunging and filling,
And sinking deep in the sea:
Then fell his eyelids for ever,
And never more drank he!

THE TREASURE-SEEKER.

I.

Many weary days I suffered,
Sick of heart and poor of purse;
Riches are the greatest blessing —
Poverty the deepest curse!
Till at last to dig a treasure
Forth I went into the wood —
"Fiend! my soul is thine for ever!"
And I signed the scroll with blood.

II.

Then I drew the magic circles,
Kindled the mysterious fire,
Placed the herbs and bones in order,
Spoke the incantation dire.
And I sought the buried metal
With a spell of mickle might —
Sought it as my master taught me;
Black and stormy was the night.

III.

And I saw a light appearing
In the distance, like a star;
When the midnight hour was tolling,
Came it waxing from afar:
Came it flashing, swift and sudden,
As if fiery wine it were,
Flowing from an open chalice,
Which a beauteous boy did bear.

IV.

And he wore a lustrous chaplet,
And his eyes were full of thought,

As he stepped into the circle
With the radiance that he brought.
And he bade me taste the goblet;
And I thought — "It cannot be,
That this boy should be the bearer
Of the Demon's gifts to me!"

V.

"Taste the draught of pure existence
Sparkling in this golden urn,
And no more with baleful magic
Shalt thou hitherward return.
Do not seek for treasures longer;
Let thy future spell-words be,
Days of labour, nights of resting:
So shall peace return to thee!"

THE SPINNER.

As I calmly sat and span,
Toiling with all zeal,
Lo! a young and handsome man
Passed my spinning-wheel.

And he praised, — what harm was there? —
Sweet the things he said —
Praised my flax-resembling hair,
And the even thread.

He with this was not content,
But must needs do more;
And in twain the thread was rent,
Though 'twas safe before.

And the flax's stonelike weight
Needed to be told;
But no longer was its state
Valued as of old.

When I took it to the weaver,
Something felt I start,
And more quickly, as with fever,
Throbbed my trembling heart.

Then I bear the thread at length
Through the heat, to bleach;
But, alas, I scarce have strength
To the pool to reach.

What I in my little room
Span so fine and slight, —
As was likely, I presume —
Came at last to light.

THE YOUTH AND THE MILL-STREAM.

[This sweet ballad, and the one entitled "The Maid of the Mill's Repentance," were written on the occasion of a visit paid by Goethe to Switzerland. "The Maid of the Mill's Treachery," to which the latter forms the sequel, was not written till the following year.]

YOUTH.

Pretty brooklet, gaily glancing
In the morning sun,
Why so joyous in thy dancing?
Whither dost thou run?
What is't lures thee to the vale?
Tell me, if thou hast a tale.

BROOK.

Youth! I was a brooklet lately,
  Wandering at my will;
Then I might have moved sedately,
  Now, to yonder mill,
Must I hurry, swift and strong,
Therefore do I race along.

YOUTH.

Brooklet, happy in thy duty,
  Nathless thou art free;
Knowest not the power of beauty
  That enchaineth me!
Looks the miller's comely daughter
Ever kindly on thy water?

BROOK.

Early comes she every morning,
  From some blissful dream;
And, so sweet in her adorning,
  Bends above my stream.
Then her bosom, white as snow,
Makes my chilly waters glow.

YOUTH.

If her beauty brings such gladness,
  Brooklet, unto thee,
Marvel not if I to madness
  Should enflamèd be.
Oh, that I could hope to move her!
Once to see her is to love her.

BROOK.

Then careering — ah, so proudly!
Rush I o'er the wheel,
And the merry mill speaks loudly
All the joy I feel.
Show me but the miller's daughter,
And more swiftly flows my water.

YOUTH.

Nay, but, brooklet, tell me truly,
Feelest thou no pain,
When she smiles, and bids thee duly
Go, nor turn again?
Hath that simple smile no cunning,
Brook, to stay thee in thy running?

BROOK.

Hard it is to lose her shadow,
Hard to pass away;
Slowly, sadly, down the meadow,
Uninspired I stray.
Oh, if I might have my will,
Back to her I'd hasten still!

YOUTH.

Brook! my love thou comprehendest;
Fare thee well awhile;
One day, when thou hither wendest,
May'st thou see me smile.
Go, and in thy gentlest fashion,
Tell that maiden all my passion!

THE MAID OF THE MILL'S TREACHERY.

[This ballad is introduced in the "Wanderjahre," in a tale called "The Foolish Pilgrim."]

WHENCE comes our friend so hastily,
When scarce the eastern sky is gray?
Hath he just ceased, though cold it be,
In yonder holy spot to pray?
The brook appears to hem his path,
Would he barefooted o'er it go?
Why curse his orisons in wrath,
Across those heights beclad with snow?

Alas! his warm bed he hath left,
Where he had looked for bliss, I ween;
And if his cloak, too, had been reft,
How fearful his disgrace had been!
By yonder villain sorely pressed,
His wallet from him had been torn;
Our hapless friend has been undressed,—
Left well-nigh naked as when born.

The reason why he came this road,
Is that he sought a pair of eyes,
Which, at the mill, as brightly glowed
As those that are in Paradise.
He will not soon again be there.
From out the house he quickly hied,
And when he gained the open air,
Thus bitterly and loudly cried:

"Within her gaze, so dazzling bright,
No word of teachery I could read;
She seemed to see me with delight,
Yet planned e'en then this cruel deed.

Could I, when basking in her smile,
Dream of the treason in her breast?
She bade kind Cupid stay awhile,
And he was there to make us blest.

"To taste of love's sweet ecstasy
Throughout the night that endless seemed,
And for her mother's help to cry
Only when morning sunlight beamed!
A dozen of her kith and kin,
A very human flood, in-pressed,
Her cousins came, her aunts peered in,
And uncles, brothers, and the rest.

"Then what a tumult, fierce and loud!
Each seemed a beast of prey to be;
The maiden's honour all the crowd,
With fearful shout, demand of me.
Why should they, madmen-like, begin
To fall upon a guiltless youth?
For he who such a prize would win,
Far nimbler needs must be, in truth.

"The way to follow up with skill
His freaks, by Love betimes is known
He ne'er will leave, within a mill,
Sweet flowers for sixteen years alone. —
They stole my clothes away, — yes, all!
And tried my cloak beside to steal.
How strange that any house so small
So many rascals could conceal!

"Then I sprang up, and raved, and swore,
To force a passage through them there.
I saw the treacherous maid once more,
And she was still, alas, *so* fair!

They all gave way before my wrath,
Wild outcries flew about pell-mell;
At length I managed to rush forth,
With voice of thunder, from that hell.

"As maidens of the town we fly,
We'll shun you maidens of the village!
Leave it to those of quality,
Their humble worshippers to pillage!
Yet if ye are of practised skill,
And of all tender ties afraid,
Exchange your lovers, if ye will,
But never let them be betrayed."

Thus sings he in the winter night,
While not a blade of grass was green.
I laughed to see his piteous plight,
For it was well deserved, I ween.
And may this be the fate of all,
Who treat by day their true loves ill,
And, with foolhardy daring, crawl
By night to Cupid's treacherous mill!

THE MAID OF THE MILL'S REPENTANCE.

YOUTH.

Away, thou swarthy witch! Go forth
From out my house, I tell thee!
Or else I needs must, in my wrath,
Expel thee!
What's this thou singest so falsely, forsooth,
Of love and a maiden's silent truth?
Who'll trust to such a story!

GYPSY.

I sing of a maid's repented fears,
And long and bitter yearning;
Her levity changed to truth and tears
All-burning.
She dreads no more the threats of her mother,
She dreads far less the blows of her brother,
Than the dearly-loved one's hatred.

YOUTH.

Of selfishness sing, and treacherous lies,
Of murder and thievish plunder!
Such actions false will cause no surprise,
Or wonder.
When they share their booty, both clothes and purse,—
As bad as you gypsies, and even worse,
Such tales find ready credence.

GYPSY.

"Alas, alas! oh, what have I done?
Can listening aught avail me?
I hear him toward my room hasten on,
To hail me.
My heart beat high, to myself I said:
'O would that thou hadst never betrayed
That night of love to thy mother!'"

YOUTH.

Alas! I foolishly ventured there,
For the cheating silence misled me,
Ah, sweetest! let me to thee repair,—
Nor dread me!
When suddenly rose a fearful din,
Her mad relations came pouring in.
My blood still boils in my body!

GYPSY.

"Oh when will return an hour like this?
I pine in silent sadness;
I've thrown away my only true bliss
With madness.
Alas, poor maid! Oh pity my youth!
My brother was then full cruel in truth
To treat the loved one so basely!"

THE POET.

The swarthy woman then went inside,
To the spring in the courtyard yonder;
Her eyes from their stain she purified,
And, — wonder! —
Her face and eyes were radiant and bright,
And the maid of the mill was disclosed to the sight
Of the startled and angry stripling.

THE MAID OF THE MILL.

Thou sweetest, fairest, dearly-loved life!
Before thine anger I cower;
But blows I dread not, nor sharp-edged knife, —
This hour
Of sorrow and love to thee I'll sing,
And myself before thy feet I'll fling,
And either live or die there!

YOUTH.

Affection, say, why buried so deep
In my heart hast thou lain hidden?
By whom hast thou now to awake from thy sleep
Been bidden?
Ah, love, that thou art immortal I see!
Nor knavish cunning nor treachery
Can destroy thy life so godlike.

THE MAID OF THE MILL.

If still, with as fond and heartfelt love,
As thou once didst swear, I'm cherished,
Then nought of the rapture we used to prove
Is perished.
So take the woman so dear to thy breast!
In her young and innocent charms be blest,
For all are thine from henceforward!

BOTH.

Now, sun, sink to rest! Now, moon, arise!
Ye stars, be now shining, now darkling!
A star of love now gleams in the skies,
All sparkling!
As long as the fountain may spring and run,
So long will we two be blended in one,
Upon each other's bosoms!

THE WALKING BELL.

A CHILD refused to go betimes
To church like other people;
He roamed abroad, when rang the chimes
On Sundays from the steeple.

His mother said: "Loud rings the bell,
Its voice ne'er think of scorning;
Unless thou wilt behave thee well,
'Twill fetch thee without warning."

The child then thought: "High over head
The bell is safe suspended —"
So to the fields he straightway sped
As if 'twas school-time ended.

The bell now ceased as bell to ring,
  Roused by the mother's twaddle;
But soon ensued a dreadful thing! —
  The bell begins to waddle.

It waddles fast, though strange it seem;
  The child, with trembling wonder,
Runs off, and flies, as in a dream;
  The bell would draw him under.

He finds the proper time at last,
  And straightway nimbly rushes
To church, to chapel, hastening fast
  Through pastures, plains, and bushes.

Each Sunday and each feast as well,
  His late disaster heeds he;
The moment that he hears the bell,
  No other summons needs he.

Poets' art is ever able
To endow with truth mere fable.

THE TRAVELLER AND THE FARM MAIDEN.

HE.

Canst thou give, O fair and matchless maiden,
  'Neath the shadow of the lindens yonder, —
  Where I'd fain one moment cease to wander, —
Food and drink to one so heavy laden?

SHE.

Wouldst thou find refreshment, traveller weary,
Bread, ripe fruit, and cream, to meet thy wishes, —
None but Nature's plain and homely dishes, —
Near the spring may soothe thy wanderings dreary.

HE.

Dreams of old acquaintance now pass through me,
Ne'er-forgotten queen of hours of blisses:
Likenesses I've often found, but *this* is
One that quite a marvel seemeth to me!

SHE.

Travellers often wonder beyond measure,
But their wonder soon see cause to smother;
Fair and dark are often like each other,
Both inspire the mind with equal pleasure.

HE.

Not now for the first time I surrender
To this form, in humble adoration;
It was brightest midst the constellation
In the hall adorned with festal splendour.

SHE.

Be thou joyful that 'tis in my power
To complete thy strange and merry story!
Silks behind her, full of purple glory,
Floated, when thou sawest her in that hour.

HE.

No, in truth, thou hast not sung it rightly!
Spirits may have told thee all about it;
Pearls and gems they spoke of, do not doubt it, —
By her gaze eclipsed, — it gleamed so brightly!

SHE.

This one thing I certainly collected:
That the fair one — (say nought, I entreat thee!)
Fondly hoping once again to meet thee,
Many a castle in the air erected.

HE.

By each wind I ceaselessly was driven,
Seeking gold and honour, too, to capture.
When my wand'rings end, then oh, what rapture,
If to find that form again 'tis given!

SHE.

'Tis the daughter of the race now banished
That thou seest, not her likeness only,
Helen and her brother, glad though lonely,
Till this farm of their estate now vanished.

HE.

But the owner surely is not wanting
Of these plains, with ev'ry beauty teeming?
Verdant fields, broad meads, and pastures gleaming,
Gushing springs, all heavenly and enchanting.

SHE.

Thou must hunt the world through, wouldst thou find him! —
We have wealth enough in our possession,
And intend to purchase the succession,
When the good man leaves the world behind him.

HE.

I have learnt the owner's own condition,
And, fair maiden, thou indeed canst buy it;
But the cost is great, I won't deny it, —
Helen is the price, — with thy permission!

SHE.

Did then fate and rank keep us asunder,
And must Love take this road, and no other?
Yonder comes my dear and trusty brother!
What will *he* say to it all, I wonder?

TURN to good account thy day;
Wilt aught lay hold on? Go not far away.

THE PAGE AND THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

PAGE.

WHERE goest thou? Where?
Miller's daughter so fair!
Thy name, pray?—

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

'Tis Lizzy.

PAGE.

Where goest thou? Where?
With the rake in thy hand?

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

Father's meadows and land
To visit, I'm busy.

PAGE.

Dost go there alone?

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

By this rake, sir, 'tis shown
That we're making the hay;
And the pears ripen fast
In the garden at last,
So I'll pick them to-day.

PAGE.

Is't a silent thicket I yonder view?

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

Oh, yes! there are two;
There's one on each side.

PAGE.

I'll follow thee soon;
When the sun burns at noon,
We'll go there, ourselves from his rays to hide,
And then in some glade all-verdant and deep —

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

Why, people would say —

PAGE.

Within mine arms thou gently wilt sleep.

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

Your pardon, I pray!
Whoever is kissed by the miller-maid,
Upon the spot must needs be betrayed.
'Twould give me distress
To cover with white
Your pretty dark dress.

Equal with equal! then all is right!
That's the motto in which I delight.
I am in love with the miller-boy;
He wears nothing that I could destroy.

FAITHFUL ECKART.

"Oh, would we were further! Oh, would we were
home,
The phantoms of night tow'rd us hastily come,
The band of the Sorceress sisters.
They hitherward speed, and on finding us here,
They'll drink, though with toil we have fetched it, the
beer,
And leave us the pitchers all empty."

Thus speaking, the children with fear take to flight,
When sudden an old man appears in their sight;
"Be quiet, child! children, be quiet!
From hunting they come, and their thirst they would
still,
So leave them to swallow as much as they will,
And the Evil Ones then will be gracious."

As said, so 'twas done! and the phantoms draw near,
And shadowlike seem they, and gray they appear,
Yet blithely they sip and they revel:
The beer has all vanished, the pitchers are void;
With cries and with shouts the wild hunters, o'erjoyed,
Speed onward o'er vale and o'er mountain.

The children in terror fly nimbly toward home,
And with them the kind one is careful to come:
"My darlings, oh, be not so mournful!" —

"They'll blame us and beat us until we are dead." —
"No, no! ye will find that all goes well," he said;
"Be silent as mice, then, and listen!

"And he by whose counsels thus wisely ye're taught,
Is he who with children loves ever to sport,
The trusty and faithful old Eckart.
Ye have heard of the wonder for many a day,
But ne'er had a proof of the marvellous lay, —
Your hands hold a proof most convincing."

They arrive at their home, and their pitchers they place
By the side of their parents, with fear on their face,
Awaiting a beating and scolding.
But see what they're tasting: the choicest of beer!
Though three times and four times they quaff the good cheer,
The pitchers remain still unemptied.

The marvel it lasts till the dawning of day;
All people who hear of it doubtless will say:
"What happened at length to the pitchers?"
In secret the children they smile, as they wait;
At last, though, they stammer, and stutter, and prate,
And straightway the pitchers were empty.

And if, children, with kindness addressed ye may be,
Whether father, or master, or alderman he,
Obey him, and follow his bidding!
And if 'tis unpleasant to bridle the tongue,
Yet talking is bad, silence good for the young —
And then will the beer fill your pitchers!

THE DANCE OF THE DEAD.

THE warder he gazes at dead o' the night
On the graveyards under him lying,
The moon into clearness throws all by her light,
The night with the daylight is vying.
There's a stir in the graves, and forth from their tombs
The form of a man, then a woman next looms
In garments long trailing and snowy.

They stretch themselves out, and with eager delight
Join the bones for the revel and dancing, —
Young and old, rich and poor, the lady and knight,
Their trains are a hinderance to dancing.
And since here by shame they no longer are bound,
They shuffle them off, and lo, strewn lie around
Their garments on each little hillock.

Here rises a shank, and a leg wobbles there
With lewd diabolical gesture;
And clatter and rattle of bones you might hear,
As of one beating sticks to a measure.
This seems to the warder a laughable game:
Then the tempter, low whispering, up to him came:
"In one of their shrouds go and wrap thee."

'Twas done soon as said; then he gained in wild flight
Concealment behind the church portal,
The moon all the while throws her bright beams of light
On the dance where they revel and sport all.
First one, then another, dispersed all are they,
And donning their shrouds steal the spectres away,
And under the graves all is quiet.

But one of them stumbles and fumbles along,
'Midst the tombstones groping intently;
But none of his comrades have done him this wrong,
His shroud in the breeze 'gins to scent he.
He rattles the door of the tower, but can find
No entrance, — good luck to the warder behind! —
'Tis barred with blest crosses of metal.

His shroud he must have, or rest can he ne'er;
And so, without further preambles,
The old Gothic carving he grips then and there,
From turret to pinnacle scrambles.
Alas for the warder! all's over, I fear;
From buttress to buttress in dev'lish career
He climbs like a long-legged spider.

The warder he trembles, and pale doth he look,
That shroud he would gladly be giving,
When piercing transfixed it a sharp-pointed hook!
He thought his last hour he was living.
Clouds cover already the vanishing moon,
With thunderous clang beats the clock a loud *One* —
Below lies the skeleton, shattered.

EFFECT AT A DISTANCE.

The Queen she stands in her castle's proud hall,
Where all brightly the tapers flame;
"Now hie thee, sir page" (he came at her call),
"And fetch me my purse for the game;
It lies close at hand
On a marble stand."
To the palace end quickly away
Sped the page without further delay.

By chance, near the Queen her sherbet did sip
A lady, the fairest of all;
In shivers the cup fell dashed from her lip, —
Ah me, what a terrible fall!
Such carelessness! drest
In her gala vest!
Sped the lady without more delay
To the palace end quickly away.

The page as back on his errand he flew,
In trouble the fair lady met;
Both page and lady, though none of them knew,
Their hearts on each other had set.
O joy and delight!
O fortunate plight!
How they fell upon each other's breast!
How they kissed and embraced and caressed;

Now severed at last and parted are they!
To her room the fair lady ran,
Back to the Queen sped the page on his way,
Past many a dagger and fan.
His vest by the Queen
All spotted was seen;
From her eyes there was nothing to hide,
With the famed Queen of Sheba she vied.

The palace duenna she called aside:
"You said in our late wordy war, —
And arguments stout and stiff you applied, —
That spirit acts not from afar;
In presence alone
Its traces are shown,
But nothing can work from afar, —
No, not even a heavenly star.

"Now look! But just now where standing we are,
Was scattered a sweet beverage,
And at the same instant, though distant and far,
It spotted the vest of the page. —
Go, get newly clad,
My heart is made glad;
My argument thus for upholding
I'll pay, and so save you a scolding."

THE BRIDE OF CORINTH.

[First published in Schiller's *Horen*, in connection with a friendly contest in the art of ballad-writing between the two great poets, to which many of their finest works are owing.]

I.

A YOUTH to Corinth, whilst the city slumbered,
Came from Athens: though a stranger there,
Soon among its townsmen to be numbered,
For a bride awaits him, young and fair.
From their childhood's years
They were plighted feres,
So contracted by their parents' care.

II.

But may not his welcome there he hindered?
Dearly must he buy it, would he speed.
He is still a heathen with his kindred,
She and hers washed in the Christian creed.
When new faiths are born,
Love and troth are torn
Rudely from the heart, howe'er it bleed.

III.

All the house is hushed; — to rest retreated
Father, daughters — not the mother quite;

She the guest with cordial welcome greeted,
Led him to a room with tapers bright;
Wine and food she brought,
Ere of them he thought,
Then departed with a fair good-night.

IV.

But he felt no hunger, and unheeded
Left the wine, and eager for the rest
Which his limbs, forspent with travel, needed,
On the couch he laid him, still undressed.
There he sleeps — when lo!
Onwards gliding slow,
At the door appears a wondrous guest.

V.

By the waning lamp's uncertain gleaming
There he sees a youthful maiden stand,
Robed in white, of still and gentle seeming,
On her brow a black and golden band.
When she meets his eyes,
With a quick surprise
Starting, she uplifts a pallid hand.

VI.

"Is a stranger here, and nothing told me?
Am I then forgotten even in name?
Ah! 'tis thus within my cell they hold me,
And I now am covered o'er with shame!
Pillow still thy head
There upon thy bed,
I will leave thee quickly as I came."

VII.

"Maiden — darling! Stay, O stay!" and, leaping
From the couch before her stands the boy:

"Ceres — Bacchus, here their gifts are heaping,
And thou bringest Amor's gentle joy!
Why with terror pale?
Sweet one, let us hail
These bright gods their festive gifts employ."

VIII.

"Oh, no — no! Young stranger, come not nigh me;
Joy is not for me, nor festive cheer.
Ah! such bliss may ne'er be tasted by me,
Since my mother, in fantastic fear,
By long sickness bowed,
To heaven's service vowed
Me, and all the hopes that warmed me here.

IX.

"They have left our hearth, and left it lonely, —
The old gods, that bright and jocund train.
One, unseen, in heaven, is worshipped only,
And upon the cross a Saviour slain;
Sacrifice is here,
Not of lamb nor steer,
But of human woe and human pain."

X.

And he asks, and all her words doth ponder, —
"Can it be that in this silent spot,
I behold thee, thou surpassing wonder!
My sweet bride, so strangely to me brought?
Be mine only now —
See, our parents' vow
Heaven's good blessing hath for us besought."

XI.

"No! thou gentle heart," she cried in anguish;
"'Tis not mine, but 'tis my sister's place;

When in lonely cell I weep and languish,
Think, oh, think of me in her embrace!
I think but of thee —
Pining drearily,
Soon beneath the earth to hide my face!"

XII.

"Nay! I swear by yonder flame which burneth,
Fanned by Hymen, lost thou shalt not be;
Droop not thus, for my sweet bride returneth
To my father's mansion back with me!
Dearest, tarry here!
Taste the bridal cheer,
For our spousal spread so wondrously!"

XIII.

Then with word and sigh their troth they plighted,
Golden was the chain she bade him wear,
But the cup he offered her she slighted,
Silver, wrought with cunning past compare.
"That is not for me;
All I ask of thee
Is one little ringlet of thy hair!"

XIV.

Dully boomed the midnight hour unhallowed,
And then first her eyes began to shine;
Eagerly with pallid lips she swallowed
Hasty draughts of purple-tinctured wine;
But the wheaten bread,
As in shuddering dread,
Put she always by with loathing sign.

XV.

And she gave the youth the cup: he drained it,
With impetuous haste he drained it dry;

Love was in his fevered heart, and pained it,
Till it ached for joy she must deny.
But the maiden's fears
Stayed him, till in tears
On the bed he sank, with sobbing cry.

XVI.

And she leans above him — "Dear one, still thee!
Ah, how sad am I to see thee so!
But, alas! these limbs of mine would chill thee:
Love! they mantle not with passion's glow;
Thou wouldst be afraid,
Didst thou find the maid
Thou hast chosen, cold as ice or snow."

XVII.

Round her waist his eager arms he bended,
With the strength that youth and love inspire;
"Wert thou even from the grave ascended,
I could warm thee well with my desire!"
Panting kiss on kiss!
Overflow of bliss!
"Burn'st thou not, and feelest me on fire?"

XVIII.

Closer yet they cling, and intermingling,
Tears and broken sobs proclaim the rest;
His hot breath through all her frame is tingling,
There they lie, caressing and caressed.
His impassioned mood
Warms her torpid blood,
Yet there beats no heart within her breast!

XIX.

Meanwhile goes the mother, softly creeping
Through the house, on needful cares intent,

Hears a murmur, and, while all are sleeping,
Wonders at the sounds, and what they meant.
Who was whispering so? —
Voices soft and low,
In mysterious converse strangely blent.

XX.

Straightway by the door herself she stations,
There to be assured what was amiss;
And she hears love's fiery protestations,
Words of ardour and endearing bliss:
"Hark, the cock! 'Tis light!
But to-morrow night
Thou wilt come again?" and kiss on kiss.

XXI.

Quick the latch she raises, and, with features
Anger-flushed, into the chamber hies.
"Are there in my house such shameless creatures,
Minions to the stranger's will?" she cries.
By the dying light,
Who is't meets her sight?
God! 'tis her own daughter she espies!

XXII.

And the youth in terror sought to cover,
With her own light veil, the maiden's head,
Clasped her close; but, gliding from her lover,
Back the vestment from her brow she spread,
And her form upright,
As with ghostly might,
Long and slowly rises from the bed.

XXIII.

"Mother! mother! wherefore thus deprive me
Of such joy as I this night have known?

Wherefore from these warm embraces drive me?
Was I wakened up to meet thy frown?
Did it not suffice
That in virgin guise,
To an early grave you forced me down?

XXIV.

"Fearful is the weird that forced me hither,
From the dark-heaped chamber where I lay;
Powerless are your drowsy anthems, neither
Can your priests prevail, howe'er they pray.
Salt nor lymph can cool,
Where the pulse is full;
Love must still burn on, though wrapped in clay.

XXV.

"To this youth my early troth was plighted,
Whilst yet Venus ruled within the land;
Mother! and that vow ye falsely slighted,
At your new and gloomy faith's command.
But no god will hear,
If a mother swear
Pure from love to keep her daughter's hand.

XXVI.

"Nightly from my narrow chamber driven,
Come I to fulfil my destined part,
Him to seek to whom my troth was given,
And to draw the life-blood from his heart.
He hath served my will;
More I yet must kill,
For another prey I now depart.

XXVII.

"Fair young man! thy thread of life is broken,
Human skill can bring no aid to thee.

There thou hast my chain — a ghastly token —
And this lock of thine I take with me.
Soon must thou decay,
Soon thou wilt be gray,
Dark although to-night thy tresses be!

XXVIII.

"Mother! hear, oh, hear my last entreaty!
Let the funeral-pile arise once more;
Open up my wretched tomb for pity,
And in flames our souls to peace restore.
When the ashes glow,
When the fire-sparks flow,
To the ancient gods aloft we soar."

THE PUPIL IN MAGIC.

I AM now, — what joy to hear it! —
Of the old magician rid;
And henceforth shall every spirit
Do whate'er by me is bid;
I have watched with rigour
All he used to do,
And will now with vigour
Work my wonders too.

Wander, wander
Onward lightly,
So that rightly
Flow the torrent,
And with teeming waters yonder
In the bath discharge its current!

And now come, thou well-worn broom,
And thy wretched form bestir;

Thou hast ever served as groom,
So fulfil my pleasure, sir!
On two legs now stand,
With a head on top;
Waterpail in hand,
Haste, and do not stop!

Wander, wander
Onward lightly,
So that rightly
Flow the torrent,
And with teeming waters yonder
In the bath discharge its current!

See! he's running to the shore,
And has now attained the pool,
And with lightning speed once more
Comes here with his bucket full!
Back he then repairs;
See how swells the tide!
How each pail he bears
Straightway is supplied!

Stop, for, lo!
All the measure
Of thy treasure
Now is right! —
Ah, I see it! woe, oh, woe!
I forget the word of might.

Ah, the word whose sound can straight
Make him what he was before!
Ah, he runs with nimble gait!
Would thou wert a broom once more!
Streams renewed for ever
Quickly bringeth he;
River after river
Rusheth on poor me.

Now no longer
Can I bear him;
I will snare him,
Knavish sprite!
Ah, my terror waxes stronger!
What a look! what fearful sight!

Oh, thou villain child of hell!
Shall the house through thee be drowned?
Floods I see that wildly swell,
O'er the threshold gaining ground.
Wilt thou not obey,
Oh, thou broom accursed?
Be thou still, I pray,
As thou wert at first!

Will enough
Never please thee?
I will seize thee,
Hold thee fast,
And thy nimble wood so tough,
With my sharp axe split at last.

See, once more he hastens back!
Now, oh, Cobold, thou shalt catch it!
I will rush upon his track;
Crashing on him falls my hatchet.
Bravely done, indeed!
See, he's cleft in twain!
Now from care I'm freed,
And can breathe again.

Woe, oh, woe!
Both the parts,
Quick as darts,
Stand on end,
Servants of my dreaded foe!
Oh, ye gods, protection send!

And they run! and wetter still
Grow the steps and grows the hall.
Lord and master, hear me call!
Ever seems the flood to fill,
Ah, he's coming! see,
Great is my dismay!
Spirits raised by me
Vainly would I lay!

"To the side
Of the room
Hasten, broom,
As of old!
Spirits I have ne'er untied
Save to act as they are told."

BEFORE A COURT OF JUSTICE.

The father's name ye ne'er shall be told
Of my darling unborn life;
"Shame, shame," ye cry, "on the strumpet bold!"
Yet I am an honest wife.

To whom I'm wedded, ye ne'er shall be told,
Yet he's both loving and fair;
He wears on his neck a chain of gold,
And a hat of straw doth he wear.

If scorn 'tis vain to seek to repel,
On me let the scorn be thrown.
I know him well, and he knows me well,
And to God, too, all is known.

Sir Parson and Sir Bailiff, again,
I pray you, leave me in peace!
My child it is, my child 'twill remain,
So let your questionings cease!

THE GOD AND THE BAYADERE.

AN INDIAN LEGEND.

[This very fine ballad was also first given in the *Horen.*]

Mahadeva,[1] Lord of earth,
For the sixth time comes below,
As a man of mortal birth, —
Like him, feeling joy and woe.
Hither loves he to repair,
And his power behind to leave;
If to punish or to spare,
Men as man he'd fain perceive.
And when he the town as a traveller hath seen,
Observing the mighty, regarding the mean,
He quits it, to go on his journey, at eve.

He was leaving now the place,
When an outcast met his eyes, —
Fair in form, with painted face, —
Where some straggling dwellings rise,
"Maiden, hail!" — "Thanks! welcome here!
Stay! — I'll join thee in the road." —
"Who art thou?" — "A Bayadere,
And this house is love's abode."
The cymbal she hastens to play for the dance,
Well skilled in its mazes the sight to entrance,
Then by her with grace is the nosegay bestowed.

Then she draws him, as in play,
O'er the threshold eagerly:
"Beauteous stranger, light as day,
Thou shalt soon this cottage see.

[1] One of the numerous names of Seeva the destroyer, — the great god of the Brahmins.

I'll refresh thee, if thou'rt tired,
And will bathe thy weary feet;
Take whate'er by thee's desired,
Toying, rest, or rapture sweet." —
She busily seeks his feigned suff'rings to ease;
Then smiles the Immortal; with pleasure he sees
That with kindness a heart so corrupted can beat.

And he makes her act the part
Of a slave; he's straight obeyed.
What at first had been but art,
Soon is nature in the maid.
By degrees the fruit we find,
Where the buds at first obtain;
When obedience fills the mind,
Love will never far remain.
But sharper and sharper the maiden to prove,
The Discerner of all things below and above,
Feigns pleasure, and horror, and maddening pain.

And her painted cheeks he kisses,
And his vows her heart enthral;
Feeling love's sharp pangs and blisses
Soon her tears begin to fall.
At his feet she now must sink,
Not with thoughts of lust or gain, —
And her slender members shrink
And devoid of power remain.
And so the bright hours with gladness prepare
Their dark, pleasing veil of a texture so fair,
And over the couch softly, tranquilly reign.

Late she falls asleep, thus blessed, —
Early wakes, her slumbers fled,
And she finds the much-loved guest
On her bosom lying dead.

"Then She Sinks beside His Bier"

Photogravure from the painting by F. Kirchbach

Screaming falls she on him there,
But, alas, too late to save!
And his rigid limbs they bear
Straightway to their fiery grave,
Then hears she the priests and the funeral song,
Then madly she runs, and she severs the throng:
"Why press tow'rd the pile thus? Why scream thus and rave?"

Then she sinks beside his bier,
And her screams through air resound:
"I must seek my spouse so dear,
E'en if in the grave he's bound.
Shall those limbs of grace divine
Fall to ashes in my sight?
Mine he was! Yes, only mine!
Ah, one single blissful night!"
The priests chant in chorus: "We bear out the old,
When long they've been weary, and late they've grown cold;
We bear out the young, too, so thoughtless and light.

"To thy priests' command give ear!
This one was thy husband ne'er;
Live still as a Bayadere,
And no duty thou need'st share.
To death's silent realms from life,
None but shades attend man's frame,
With the husband, none but wife, —
That is duty, that is fame.
Ye trumpets, your sacred lament haste to raise!
Oh, welcome, ye gods, the bright lustre of days!
Oh, welcome to heaven the youth from the flame!"

Thus increased her torments are
By the cruel, heartless choir;

And with arms outstretching far
  Leaps she on the glowing pyre.
But the youth divine outsprings
  From the flame with heav'nly grace,
And on high his flight he wings,
  While his arms his love embrace.
In the sinner repentant the Godhead feels joy;
Immortals delight thus their might to employ
Lost children to raise to a heavenly place.

THE PARIAH.

I. THE PARIAH'S PRAYER.

Dreaded Brama, lord of might!
  All proceed from thee alone;
Thou art he who judgeth right!
  Dost thou none but Brahmins own?
Do but Rajahs come from thee?
  None but those of high estate?
  Didst not thou the ape create,
Ay, and even such as we?

We are not of noble kind,
  For with woe our lot is rife;
And what others deadly find
  Is our only source of life.
Let this be enough for men,
  Let them, if they will, despise us;
  But thou, Brama, thou shouldst prize us,
All are equal in thy ken.

Now that, Lord, this prayer is said,
  As thy child acknowledge me;
Or let one be born instead,
  Who may link me on to thee!

Didst not thou a Bayadere
As a goddess heavenward raise?
And we, too, to swell thy praise,
Such a miracle would hear.

II. LEGEND.

[The successful manner in which Goethe employs the simple rhymeless, trochaic metre in this and in many other poems will perhaps be remarked by the reader.]

WATER-FETCHING goes the noble
Brahmin's wife, so pure and lovely;
He is honoured, void of blemish,
And of justice rigid, stern.
Daily from the sacred river
Brings she back refreshment precious, —
But where is the pail and pitcher?
She of neither stands in need.
For with pure heart, hands unsullied,
She the water lifts, and rolls it
To a wondrous ball of crystal;
This she bears with gladsome bosom,
Modestly, with graceful motion,
To her husband in the house.
She to-day at dawn of morning
Praying comes to Ganges' waters,
Bends her o'er the glassy surface —
Sudden, in the waves reflected,
Flying swiftly far above her,
From the highest heavens descending,
She discerns the beauteous form
Of a youth divine, created
By the God's primeval wisdom
In his own eternal breast.
When she sees him, straightway feels she
Wondrous, new, confused sensations

In her inmost, deepest being;
Fain she'd linger o'er the vision,
Then repels it, — it returneth, —
And, perplexed, she bends her flood-wards
With uncertain hands to draw it;
But, alas, she draws no more!
For the water's sacred billows
Seem to fly, to hasten from her;
She but sees the fearful chasm
Of a whirlpool black disclosed.

Arms drop down, and footsteps stumble,
Can this be the pathway homewards?
Shall she fly, or shall she tarry?
Can she think, when thought and counsel,
When assistance, all are lost?
So before her spouse appears she —
On her looks he — look is judgment —
Proudly on the sword he seizes,
To the hill of death he drags her,
Where delinquents' blood pays forfeit.
What resistance could she offer?
What excuses could she proffer,
Guilty, knowing not her guilt?

And with bloody sword returns he,
Musing, to his silent dwelling,
When his son before him stands:
"Whose this blood? Oh, father! father!"
"The delinquent woman's!" — "Never!
For upon the sword it dries not,
Like the blood of the delinquent;
Fresh it flows, as from the wound.
Mother! mother! hither hasten;
Unjust never was my father,
Tell me what he now hath done." —
"Silence; silence! *hers* the blood is!"

"Whose, my father?" — "Silence! Silence!"
"What! oh, what! my mother's blood!
What her crime? What did she? Answer!
Now, the sword! the sword now hold I!
Thou thy wife perchance might'st slaughter,
But my mother might'st not slay!
Through the flames the wife is able
Her belovèd spouse to follow,
And his dear and only mother
Through the sword her faithful son."
"Stay! oh, stay!" exclaimed the father:
"Yet 'tis time, so hasten, hasten!
Join the head upon the body,
With the sword then touch the figure,
And, alive, she'll follow thee."

Hastening, he, with breathless wonder,
Sees the bodies of two women
Lying crosswise; and their heads, too;
Oh, what horror! which to choose!
Then his mother's head he seizes, —
Does not kiss it, deadly pale 'tis, —
On the nearest headless body
Puts it quickly, and then blesses
With the sword the pious work.
Then a giant form uprises. —
From the dear lips of his mother,
Lips all godlike — changeless — blissful,
Sound these words with horror fraught:
"Son, oh, son! what overhastening!
Yonder is thy mother's body,
Near it lies the impious head
Of the woman who hath fallen
Victim to the judgment-sword!
To her body I am grafted
By thy hand for endless ages;
Wise in counsel, wild in action,

I shall be amongst the gods.
E'en the heavenly boy's own image,
Though in brow and eye so lovely,
Sinking downwards to the bosom
Mad and raging lust will stir.

"'Twill return again for ever,
Ever rising, ever sinking,
Now obscured, and now transfigured,
So great Brama hath ordained.
He 'twas sent the beauteous pinions,
Radiant face, and slender members
Of the only God-begotten,
That I might be proved and tempted;
For from high descends temptation,
When the gods ordain it so.
And so I, the Brahmin woman,
With my head in Heaven reclining,
Must experience, as a Pariah,
The debasing power of earth.

"Son, I send thee to thy father!
Comfort him! Let no sad penance,
Weak delay, or thought of merit,
Hold thee in the desert fast;
Wander on through ev'ry nation,
Roam abroad throughout all ages,
And proclaim to e'en the meanest,
That great Brama hears his cry!

"None is in his eyes the meanest —
He whose limbs are lame and palsied,
He whose soul is wildly riven,
Worn with sorrow, hopeless, helpless,
Be he Brahmin, be he Pariah,
If tow'rd heaven he turns his gaze,

Will perceive, will learn to know it:
Thousand eyes are glowing yonder,
Thousand ears are calmly list'ning,
From which nought below is hid.

"If I to his throne soar upward,
If he sees my fearful figure
By his might transformed to horror,
He for ever will lament it, —
May it to your good be found!
And I now will kindly warn him,
And I now will madly tell him
Whatsoe'er my mind conceiveth,
What within my bosom heaveth.
But my thoughts, my inmost feelings —
Those a secret shall remain."

III. THE PARIAH'S THANKS.

MIGHTY Brama, now I'll bless thee!
'Tis from thee that worlds proceed!
As my ruler I confess thee,
For of all thou takest heed.

All thy thousand ears thou keepest
Open to each child of earth;
We, 'mongst mortals sunk the deepest,
Have from thee received new birth.

Bear in mind the woman's story,
Who, through grief, divine became;
Now I'll wait to view His glory,
Who omnipotence can claim.

DEATH LAMENT OF THE NOBLE WIFE OF ASAN AGA.

[This beautiful poem, purporting to be a translation from the Morlachian, was first printed in Herder's admirable collection of ballads, translated into German from almost every European language, and published under the title of Volkslieder. The fine poetic instinct of Goethe was signally displayed in this composition; for although, as Mickiewicz has observed ("Les Slaves," tome i. p. 323, Paris, 1849), he had to divine the import of the poem across three bad translations, and was at the same time ignorant of the Slavic language, he produced a perfect version, having instinctively detected and avoided the faults of the previous translators.]

What is yon so white beside the greenwood?
Is it snow, or flight of cygnets resting?
Were it snow, ere now it had been melted;
Were it swans, ere now the flock had left us.
Neither snow nor swans are resting yonder,
'Tis the glittering tents of Asan Aga.
Faint he lies from wounds in stormy battle;
There his mother and his sisters seek him,
But his wife hangs back for shame, and comes not.

When the anguish of his hurts was over,
To his faithful wife he sent this message —
"Longer 'neath my roof thou shalt not tarry,
Neither in my court nor in my household."

When the lady heard that cruel sentence,
'Reft of sense she stood, and racked with anguish;
In the court she heard the horses stamping,
And in fear that it was Asan coming,
Fled towards the tower, to leap and perish.

Then in terror ran her little daughters,
Calling after her, and weeping sorely,

"These are not the steeds of Father Asan;
'Tis our uncle Pintorovich coming!"

And the wife of Asan turned to meet him;
Sobbing, threw her arms around her brother.
"See the wrongs, O brother, of thy sister!
These five babes I bore and must I leave them?"

Silently the brother, from his girdle,
Draws the ready deed of separation,
Wrapped within a crimson silken cover.
She is free to seek her mother's dwelling —
Free to join in wedlock with another.

When the woeful lady saw the writing,
Kissed she both her boys upon the forehead,
Kissed on both the cheeks her sobbing daughters;
But she cannot tear herself for pity
From the infant smiling in the cradle!

Rudely did her brother tear her from it,
Deftly lifted her upon a courser,
And in haste towards his father's dwelling,
Spurred he onward with the woeful lady.

Short the space; seven days, but barely seven —
Little space I ween — by many nobles
Was the lady — still in weeds of mourning —
Was the lady courted in espousal.

Far the noblest was Imoski's cadi;
And the dame in tears besought her brother —
"I adjure thee, by the life thou bearest,
Give me not a second time in marriage,
That my heart may not be rent asunder
If again I see my darling children!"

Little recked the brother of her bidding,
Fixed to wed her to Imoski's cadi.
But the gentle lady still entreats him —
Send at least a letter, O my brother!
To Imoski's cadi, thus imploring —
"I, the youthful widow, greet thee fairly,
And entreat thee by this self-same token,
When thou comest hither with thy bridesmen,
Bring a heavy veil, that I may shroud me
As we pass along by Asan's dwelling,
So I may not see my darling orphans."

Scarcely had the cadi read the letter,
When he called together all his bridesmen;
Bound to bring the lady homewards,
And he brought the veil as she entreated.

Jocundly they reached the princely mansion,
Jocundly they bore her thence in triumph;
But, when they drew near to Asan's dwelling,
Then the children recognised their mother,
And they cried, "Come back unto the chamber —
Share the meal this evening with thy children!"
Then she turned her to the lordly bridegroom —
"Pray thee, let the bridesmen and their horses
Halt a little by the once-loved dwelling,
Till I give these presents to my children."

And they halted by the once-loved dwelling,
And she gave the weeping children presents,
Gave each boy a cap with gold embroidered,
Gave each girl a gay and costly garment,
And with tears she left a tiny mantle
For the helpless baby in the cradle.

These things marked the father, Asan Aga,
And in sorrow called he to his children —

"Turn again to me, ye poor deserted;
Hard as steel is now your mother's bosom;
Shut so fast it cannot throb with pity!"

Thus he spoke; and when the lady heard him,
Pale as death she dropped upon the pavement,
And the life fled from her wretched bosom,
As she saw her children turning from her.

IDYLL.

A village Chorus is supposed to be assembled, and about to commence its festive procession.

[Written for the birthday of the Duchess Louisa of Weimar.]

CHORUS.

THE festal day hail ye
With garlands of pleasure,
And dances' soft measure,
With rapture commingled
And sweet choral song.

DAMON.

Oh, how I yearn from out the crowd to flee!
What joy a secret glade would give to me!
Amid the throng, the turmoil here,
Confined the plain, the breezes e'en appear.

CHORUS.

Now order it truly,
That ev'ry one duly

May roam and may wander,
Now here and now yonder,
The meadows along.

[The Chorus retreats gradually, and the song becomes fainter and fainter, till it dies away in the distance.]

DAMON.

In vain ye call, in vain would lure me on;
True my heart speaks, but with itself alone.
And if I may view
A blessing-fraught land,
The heaven's clear blue,
And the plain's verdant hue,
Alone I'll rejoice,
Undisturbed by man's voice.
And there I'll pay homage
To womanly merit,
Observe it in spirit,
In spirit pay homage;
To echo alone
Shall my secret be known.

CHORUS.

[Faintly mingling with Damon's song in the distance.]

To echo — alone —
Shall my secret — be known.

MENALCAS.

My friend, why meet I here with thee?
Thou hastenest not to join the festal throng?
No longer stay, but come with me,
And mingle in the dance and song.

DAMON.

Thou'rt welcome, friend ! but suffer me to roam
  Where these old beeches hide me from man's view;
Love seeks in solitude a home,
  And homage may retreat there, too.

MENALCAS.

Thou seekest here a spurious fame,
  And hast a mind to-day to grieve me.
Love as thy portion thou may'st claim,
  But homage thou must share with *all*, believe me!

When their voices thousands raise,
And the dawn of morning praise,
    Rapture bringing,
    Blithely singing
      On before us,
Heart and ear in pleasure vie;

And when thousands join in chorus,
  With feelings brightly glowing,
  And the wishes overflowing,
Forcibly they'll bear thee high.

[The Chorus gradually approaches from the distance.]

DAMON.

Distant strains are hither wending,
  And I'm gladdened by the throng;
Yes, they're coming, — yes, descending
  To the valley from the height.

MENALCAS.

Let us haste, our footsteps blending
With the rhythm of the song!
Yes, they come; their course they're bending
Toward the wood's green sward so bright.

CHORUS.

[Gradually becoming louder.]

Yes, we hither come, attending
With the harmony of song,
As the hours their race are ending
On this day of blest delight.

ALL.

Let none reveal
The thoughts we feel,
The aims we own!
Let joy alone
Disclose the story!
She'll prove it right
And her delight
Includes the glory,
Includes the bliss
Of days like this!

RINALDO.[1]

[This cantata was written for Prince Frederick of Gotha, and set to music by Winter, the prince singing the part of Rinaldo. — See the *Annalen*.]

CHORUS.

To the strand! quick, mount the bark!
If no favouring breezes blow,
Ply the oar and nimbly row,
And with zeal your prowess mark!
O'er the sea we thus career.

RINALDO.

Oh, let me linger one short moment here!
'Tis heaven's decree, I may not hence away.
The rugged cliffs, the wood-encircled bay,
Hold me a prisoner, and my flight delay.
Ye were so fair, but now that dream is o'er;
The charms of earth, the charms of heaven are nought.
What keeps me in this spot so terror-fraught?
My only joy is fled from me for evermore.

Let me taste those days so sweet,
Heaven descended, once again!
Heart, dear heart! ay, warmly beat!
Spirit true, recall those days!
Freeborn breath, thy gentle lays
Mingled are with joy and pain.

Round the beds so richly gleaming,
Rises up a palace fair;
And with rosy fragrance teeming,
As in dream thou saw'st it ne'er.

[1] See Tasso's "Gerusalemme Liberata," Canto XVI.

And this spacious garden round,
Far extend the galleries;
Roses blossom near the ground,
High in air, too, bloom the trees.

Wat'ry flakes and jets are falling,
Sweet and silv'ry strains arise;
While the turtle-dove is calling,
And the nightingale replies.

CHORUS.

Gently come! feel no alarm,
On a noble duty bent;
Vanished now is ev'ry charm
That by magic power was lent.
Friendly words and greetings calm
On his wounds will pour soft balm,
Fill his mind with sweet content.

RINALDO.

Hark! the turtle-dove is calling,
And the nightingale replies;
Wat'ry flakes and jets are falling,
Mingling with their melodies.

But all of them say:
Her only we mean;
But all fly away,
As soon as she's seen, —
The beauteous young maiden,
With graces so rife.

Then lily and rose
In wreaths are entwining:
In dances combining,

Each zephyr that blows
Its brother is greeting,
All flying and meeting
With balsam full laden,
When awakened to life.

CHORUS.

No! no longer may we wait;
Rouse him from his vision straight!
Show the adamantine shield!

RINALDO.

Woe! what form is here revealed!

CHORUS.

'Twill disclose the cheat to thee.

RINALDO.

Am I doomed myself to see
Thus degraded evermore?

CHORUS.

Courage take, and all is o'er.

RINALDO.

Be it so! I'll take fresh heart,
From the spot beloved depart,
Leave Armida once again. —
Come then! here no more remain!

CHORUS.

Yes, 'tis well no more remain.

SEMI - CHORUS.

Away then! let's fly
O'er the zephyr-kissed ocean.
The soul-lighted eye
Sees armies in motion,
Sees proud banners wave
O'er the dust-sprinkled course.

CHORUS.

From his forefathers brave
Draws the hero new force.

RINALDO.

With sorrow laden,
Within this valley's
All-silent alleys
The fairest maiden
Again I see.
Twice can this be?
What! shall I hear it,
And not have spirit
To ease her pains?

CHORUS.

Unworthy chains?

RINALDO.

And now I've seen her
Alas! how changed!
With cold demeanour,
And looks estranged,
With ghostly tread,—
All hope is fled,

Yes, fled for ever.
The lightnings quiver,
Each palace falls;
The godlike halls,
Each joyous hour
Of spirit-power,
With love's sweet day
All fade away!

CHORUS.

Yes, fade away!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Already are heard
The prayers of the pious.
Why longer deny us?
The favouring zephyr
Forbids all delay.

CHORUS.

Away, then! away!

RINALDO.

With heart sadly stirred,
Your command I receive;
Ye force me to leave.
Unkind is the zephyr, —
Oh, wherefore not stay?

CHORUS.

Away, then! away!

THE FIRST WALPURGIS-NIGHT.

A DRUID.

Sweet smiles the May!
The forest gay
From frost and ice is freed;
No snow is found,
Glad songs resound
Across the verdant mead.
Upon the height
The snow lies light,
Yet thither now we go,
There to extol our Father's name,
Whom we for ages know.
Amid the smoke shall gleam the flame;
Thus pure the heart will grow.

THE DRUIDS.

Amid the smoke shall gleam the flame;
Extol we now our Father's name,
Whom we for ages know!
Up, up, then, let us go!

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

Would ye, then, so rashly act?
Would ye instant death attract?
Know ye not the cruel threats
Of the victors we obey?
Round about are placed their nets
In the sinful heathen's way.
Ah! upon the lofty wall
Wife and children slaughter they;
And we all
Hasten to a certain fall.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Ay, upon the camp's high wall
All our children loved they slay.
Ah, what cruel victors they!
And we all
Hasten to a certain fall.

A DRUID.

Who fears to-day
His rites to pay,
Deserves his chains to wear.
The forest's free!
This wood take we,
And straight a pile prepare!
Yet in the wood
To stay 'tis good
By day till all is still,
With watchers all around us placed
Protecting you from ill.
With courage fresh, then, let us haste
Our duties to fulfil.

CHORUS OF WATCHERS.

Ye valiant watchers now divide
Your numbers through the forest wide,
And see that all is still,
While they their rites fulfil.

A WATCHER.

Let us in a cunning wise,
Yon dull Christian priests surprise!
With the devil of their talk
We'll those very priests confound.
Come with prong and come with fork,
Raise a wild and rattling sound

Through the livelong night, and prowl
All the rocky passes round.
Screech-owl, owl,
Join in chorus with our howl!

CHORUS OF WATCHERS.

Come with prong, and come with fork,
Like the devil of their talk,
And with wildly rattling sound,
Prowl the desert rocks around!
Screech-owl, owl,
Join in chorus with our howl!

A DRUID.

Thus far 'tis right,
That we by night
Our Father's praises sing;
Yet when 'tis day,
To Thee we may
A heart unsullied bring.
'Tis true that now,
And often, Thou
Favourest the foe in fight.
As from the smoke is freed the blaze,
So let our faith burn bright!
And if they crush our olden ways,
Who e'er can crush Thy light?

A CHRISTIAN WATCHER.

Comrades, quick! your aid afford!
All the brood of hell's abroad:
See how their enchanted forms
Through and through with flames are glowing!
Dragon-women, men-wolf swarms,
On in quick succession going!

Let us, let us haste to fly!
Wilder yet the sounds are growing,
And the arch fiend roars on high;
From the ground
Hellish vapours rise around.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN WATCHERS.

Terrible enchanted forms,
Dragon-women, men-wolf swarms!
Wilder yet the sounds are growing!
See, the arch fiend comes, all-glowing!
From the ground
Hellish vapours rise around.

CHORUS OF DRUIDS.

As from the smoke is freed the blaze,
So let our faith burn bright!
And if they crush our olden ways,
Whoe'er can crush Thy light?

The following odes are the most singular of all the poems of Goethe, and to many will appear so wild and fantastic as to leave anything but a pleasing impression. Those at the beginning, addressed to his friend Behrisch, were written at the age of eighteen, and most of the remainder were composed while he was still quite young. Despite, however, the extravagance of some of them, such as the "Winter Journey over the Hartz Mountain" and the "Wanderer's Storm-Song," nothing can be finer than the noble one entitled "Mahomet's Song," and others, such as the "Spirit Song over the Waters," "The Godlike," and, above all, the magnificent sketch of "Prometheus," which forms part of an unfinished piece bearing the same name, and called by Goethe a "Dramatic Fragment."

TO MY FRIEND.

[These three odes are addressed to a certain Behrisch, who was tutor to Count Linedenan, and of whom Goethe gives an odd account at the end of the seventh book of his "Autobiography."]

FIRST ODE.

TRANSPLANT the beauteous tree!
Gardener, it gives me pain;
A happier resting-place
Its trunk deserved.

Yet the strength of its nature
To Earth's exhausting avarice,
To Air's destructive inroads,
An antidote opposed.

See how it in spring-time
Coins its pale green leaves!
Their orange-fragrance
Poisons each fly-blow straight.

The caterpillar's tooth
Is blunted by them;
With silvery hues they gleam
In the bright sunshine.

Its twigs the maiden
Fain would twine in
Her bridal-garland;
Youth its fruit are seeking.

See, the autumn cometh!
The caterpillar
Sighs to the crafty spider, —
Sighs that the tree will not fade.

Hov'ring thither,
From out her yew-tree dwelling,
The gaudy foe advances
Against the kindly tree,

And cannot hurt it.
But the more artful one
Defiles with nauseous venom
Its silver leaves;

And sees with triumph
How the maiden shudders,
The youth, how mourns he,
On passing by.

Transplant the beauteous tree!
Gardener, it gives me pain.
Tree, thank the gardener
Who moves thee hence!

SECOND ODE.

THOU goest! I murmur —
Go! let me murmur.
Oh, worthy man,
Fly from this land!

Deadly marshes,
Steaming mists of October
Here interweave their currents,
Blending for ever.

Noisome insects
Here are engendered;
Fatal darkness
Veils their malice.

The fiery-tongued serpent,
Hard by the sedgy bank,
Stretches his pampered body,
Caressed by the sun's bright beams.

Tempt no gentle night-rambles
Under the moon's cold twilight!
Loathsome toads hold their meetings
Yonder at every crossway.

Injuring not,
Fear will they cause thee.
Oh, worthy man,
Fly from this land!

THIRD ODE.

Be void of feeling!
A heart that soon is stirred,
Is a possession sad
Upon this changing earth.

Behrisch, let spring's sweet smile
Never gladden thy brow!
Then winter's gloomy tempests
Never will shadow it o'er.

Lean thyself ne'er on a maiden's
Sorrow-engendering breast.
Ne'er on the arm,
Misery-fraught, of a friend.

Already Envy
From out his rocky ambush
Upon thee turns
The force of his lynx-like eyes,

Stretches his talons,
On thee falls,
In thy shoulders
Cunningly plants them.

Strong are his skinny arms,
As panther-claws;
He shaketh thee,
And rends thy frame.

Death 'tis to part;
'Tis threefold death
To part, not hoping
Ever to meet again.

Thou wouldst rejoice to leave
This hated land behind,
Wert thou not chained to me
With friendship's flowery chains.

Burst them! I'll not repine.
No noble friend
Would stay his fellow captive
If means of flight appear.

The remembrance
Of his dear friend's freedom
Gives *him* freedom
In his dungeon.

Thou goest, — I'm left.
But e'en already
The last year's wingèd spokes
Whirl round the smoken axle.

I number the turns
Of the thundering wheel;
The last one I bless, —
Each bar then is broken, I'm free then
as thou!

SONG OF THE SPIRITS OVER THE WATERS.

The soul of man is like to water;
From Heaven it cometh,
To Heaven it riseth,
And then returneth to earth,
For ever alternating.
Then foameth brightly,
In cloud-waves rolling,
O'er polished rocks.
Then tranquil flowing,
It wandereth, hiding,
Soft murmuring to depths below it.
Over scrags from the steep projecting
Falls it all roaring, foaming, step-like,
Far downward.
Then, level flowing,
Creeps to the meadow away:
And in the glassy sea
Gaze all the planets at their fair faces.

Wind is to wavelet tenderest lover:
Wind from the deep tears foam-crested billows.
Soul of man mortal, how art thou like water!
Fate of man mortal, how art thou like wind!

MAHOMET'S SONG.

[This song was intended to be introduced in a dramatic poem entitled "Mahomet," the plan of which was not carried out by Goethe. He mentions that it was to have been sung by Ali toward the end of the piece, in honour of his master, Mahomet, shortly before his death, and when at the height of his glory, of which it is typical.]

See the rock-born stream!
Like the gleam
Of a star so bright!
Kindly spirits
High above the clouds
Nourished him while youthful
In the copse between the cliffs.

Young and fresh,
From the clouds he danceth
Down upon the marble rocks;
Then toward heaven
Leaps exulting.

Through the mountain-passes
Chaseth he the coloured pebbles,
And, advancing like a chief,
Tears his brother streamlets with him
In his course.

In the valley down below
'Neath his footsteps spring the flowers,
And the meadow
In his breath finds life.

Yet no shady vale can stay him,
Nor can flowers,

Round his knees all softly twining
With their loving eyes detain him;
To the plain his course he taketh,
Serpent-winding.

Social streamlets
Join his waters. And now moves he
O'er the plain in silv'ry glory,
And the plain in him exults,
And the rivers from the plain,
And the streamlets from the mountain,
Shout with joy, exclaiming: "Brother,
Brother, take thy brethren with thee,
With thee to thine aged father,
To the everlasting ocean,
Who, with arms outstretching far,
Waiteth for us;
Ah, in vain those arms lie open
To embrace his yearning children;
For the thirsty sand consumes us
In the desert waste; the sunbeams
Drink our life-blood; hills around us
Into lakes would dam us! Brother,
Take thy brethren of the plain,
Take thy brethren of the mountain
With thee, to thy father's arms!"

Let all come, then!—
And now swells he
Lordlier still; yea, e'en a people
Bears his regal flood on high!
And in triumph onward rolling,
Names to countries gives he, — cities
Spring to light beneath his foot.

Ever, ever, on he rushes,
Leaves the towers' flame-tipped summits,

Marble palaces, the offspring
Of his fulness, far behind.

Cedar-houses bears the Atlas
On his giant shoulders; fluttering
In the breeze far, far above him
Thousand flags are gaily floating,
Bearing witness to his might.

And so beareth he his brethren,
All his treasures, all his children,
Wildly shouting, to the bosom
Of his long-expectant sire.

MY GODDESS.

Say, which Immortal
Merits the highest reward ?
With none contend I,
But I will give it
To the aye-changing,
Ever-moving
Wondrous daughter of Jove,
His best-beloved offspring,
Sweet Phantasy.

For unto her
Hath he granted
All the fancies which erst
To none allowed he
Saving himself;
Now he takes his pleasure
In the mad one.

She may, crowned with roses,
With staff twined round with lilies

Roam through flowery valleys,
Rule the butterfly people,
And soft-nourishing dew
With bee-like lips
Drink from the blossom:

Or else she may,
With fluttering hair
And gloomy looks,
Sigh in the wind
Round rocky cliffs,
And thousand-hued,
Like morn and even,
Ever changing,
Like moonbeam's light,
To mortals appear.

Let us all, then,
Adore the Father!
The old, the mighty,
Who such a beauteous
Ne'er-fading spouse
Deigns to accord
To perishing mortals!

To us alone
Doth he unite her,
With heavenly bonds,
While he commands her
In joy and sorrow,
As a true spouse
Never try to fly us.

All the remaining
Races so poor
Of life-teeming earth,
In children so rich,

Wander and feed
In vacant enjoyment,
And 'mid the dark sorrows
Of evanescent
Restricted life, —
Bowed by the heavy
Yoke of Necessity.

But unto us he
Hath his most versatile,
Most cherished daughter
Granted, — what joy!

Lovingly greet her
As a beloved one!
Give her the woman's
Place in our home!

And, oh, may the aged
Stepmother Wisdom
Her gentle spirit
Ne'er seek to harm!

Yet know I her sister,
The older, sedater,
Mine own silent friend;
Oh, may she never,
Till life's lamp is quenched,
Turn away from me, —
That noble inciter,
Comforter, — Hope!

HARTZ MOUNTAINS.

RIDE TO THE HARTZ IN WINTER.

[The following explanation is necessary in order to make this ode in any way intelligible. The poet is supposed to leave his companions, who are proceeding on a hunting expedition in winter, in order himself to pay a visit to a hypochondriacal friend, and also to see the mining in the Hartz mountains. The ode alternately describes, in a very fragmentary and peculiar way, the naturally happy disposition of the poet himself and the unhappiness of his friend; it pictures the wildness of the road and the dreariness of the prospect, which is relieved at one spot by the distant sight of a town, a very vague allusion to which is made in the third strophe; it recalls the hunting party on which his companions have gone: and, after an address to Love, concludes by a contrast between unexplored recesses of the highest peak of the Hartz and the metalliferous veins of its smaller brethren.]

FREE as the hawk,
Which, on yon dark morning cloud-pile,
With soft spread pinion resting,
Looks out for prey,
Float my loose song!

Sure a God hath
Unto each his path
Fore-appointed,
Which the fortunate
Swift to happiest
Goal pursues:
But whom misfortune
Hath frozen to the heart,
He frets him vainly
Against the restraint of
The wire-woven cord, which
Soon shall the bitter scissors
Snap once for all.

To gloomy thicket
Rushes the reindeer wild,
And with the sparrows have
Long ago the rich folks
Into their swamps for shelter sunk.
Easy to follow the chariot,
When 'tis Fortune drives.
Just as the lumbering cart
Over the hard, smooth road rolls,
After a monarch's march.

But aside who fareth?
In the woods he loses his path;
Swiftly behind him
The boughs fly together,
The grass stands up again,
The desert o'erwhelms him.

Ah, but who healeth the pangs of
Him, whose balm becomes poison?
Who but hate for man
From the fulness of love hath drunk?
First despised, and now a despiser,
Wastes he secretly
All his own best worth,
Brooding over himself.

Is there on thy psalter,
Father of love, one tone
Which his ear would welcome?
Oh, then, quicken his heart!
Open his beclouded look
Over the thousand fountains
All around him thirsting there
In the desert.

Thou, who on each bestowest
Joys, a superabundant share,
Bless the brothers of the chase,
Out in search of wild beasts,
With danger-loving zeal of youth,
Eager to take life,
Late avengers of mischief,
Which for years hath defied the
Farmer's threatening cudgel.

But the lone wanderer wrap
In thy golden cloud-fleeces;
And wreathe with evergreen,
Till the summer roses be blowing,
The dripping ringlets,
O Love, of this thy poet!

With thy flickering torch thou
Lightest him on
Through the fords, in the night,
Over treacherous footing
On desolate commons.
With the thousand tints of the moon, thou
Smilest to his heart so!
With the bitter cold blast
Bearest him gloriously up.
Winter torrents down from the rocks roll
Into his anthems.
An altar of cheerfulest thanks
Seems to him the terrible summit's
Snow-hung, hoary crown,
Wreathed with rows of pale spirits
By the marvellous people.

Thou standest, with unexplored bosom
Mysteriously prominent,

Over the astonished world,
And lookest from the clouds there
Down on its riches and majesty,
Which thou from the veins of these thy brothers
Round thee here waterest.

THE WANDERER'S STORM-SONG.

[Goethe says of this ode, that it is the only one remaining out of several strange hymns and dithyrambs composed by him at a period of great unhappiness, when the love-affair between him and Frederica had been broken off by him. He used to sing them while wandering wildly about the country. This particular one was caused by his being caught in a tremendous storm on one of these occasions. He calls it a half-crazy piece (*haybunsinn*), and the reader will probably agree with him.]

He whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Feels no dread within his heart
At the tempest or the rain.
He whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Will to the rain clouds,
Will to the hail-storm,
Sing in reply
As the lark sings,
O thou on high!

Him whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Thou wilt raise above the mud-track
With thy fiery pinions.
He will wander,
As, with flowery feet,
Over Deucalion's dark flood,
Python-slaying, light, glorious,
Pythius Apollo.

Him whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Thou wilt place upon thy fleecy pinion,

When he sleepeth on the rock, —
Thou wilt shelter with thy guardian wing
In the forest's midnight hour.

Him whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Thou wilt wrap up warmly
In the snow-drift;
Toward the warmth approach the Muses,
Toward the warmth approach the Graces.

Ye Muses, hover round me!
Ye Graces also!
That is water, that is earth,
And the son of water and of earth
Over which I wander,
Like the gods.

Ye are pure, like the heart of the water,
Ye are pure like the marrow of earth,
Hov'ring round me, while I hover
Over water, o'er the earth,
Like the gods.

Shall he, then, return,
The small, the dark, the fiery peasant?
Shall he, then, return, awaiting
Only thy gifts, O Father Bromius,
And brightly gleaming, warm the spreading
fire?
Return with joy?
And I, whom ye attended,
Ye Muses and ye Graces,
Whom all awaits that ye,
Ye Muses and ye Graces,
Of circling bliss in life
Have glorified — shall I
Return dejected?

Father Bromius!
Thou art the Genius,
Genius of ages,
Thou'rt what inward glow
To Pindar was,
What to the world
Phœbus Apollo.

Woe! Woe! Inward warmth,
Spirit-warmth,
Central-point!
Glow, and vie with
Phœbus Apollo:
Coldly soon
His regal look
Over thee will swiftly glide, —
Envy-struck
Linger o'er the cedar's strength,
Which, to flourish,
Waits him not.

Why doth my lay name thee the last?
Thee, from whom it began,
Thee, in whom it endeth,
Thee, from whom it flows,
Jupiter Pluvius!
Toward thee streams my song,
And a Castalian spring
Runs as a fellow brook,
Runs to the idle ones,
Mortal, happy ones,
Apart from thee,
Who coverest me around,
Jupiter Pluvius!

Not by the elm-tree
Him didst thou visit,

With the pair of doves
Held in his gentle arm, —
With the beauteous garland of roses, —
Caressing him, so blest in his flowers,
Anacreon,
Storm-breathing godhead!
Not in the poplar grove,
Near the Sybaris' strand,
Not in the mountain's
Sun-illumined brow
Didst thou seize him,
The flower-singing,
Honey-breathing,
Sweetly nodding
Theocritus.

When the wheels were rattling,
Wheel on wheel toward the goal,
High arose
The sound of the lash
Of youth with victory glowing,
In the dust rolling,
As from the mountain fall
Showers of stone in the vale —
Then thy soul was brightly glowing, Pindar —
Glowing? Poor heart?
There, on the hill, —
Heavenly might!
But enough glow
Thither to wend,
Where is my cot?

TO FATHER[1] KRONOS.

[Written in a post-chaise.]

HASTEN thee, Kronos!
On with clattering trot!
Down hill goeth thy path;
Loathsome dizziness ever,
When thou delayest, assails me.
Quick, rattle along,
Over stock and stone let thy trot
Into life straightway lead!

Now once more
Up the toilsome ascent
Hasten, panting for breath!
Up, then, nor idle be, —
Striving and hoping, up, up!

Wide, high, glorious the view
Gazing round upon life,
While from mount unto mount
Hovers the spirit eterne,
Life eternal foreboding.

Sideways a roof's pleasant shade
Attracts thee,
And a look that promises coolness
On the maidenly threshold.
There refresh thee! And, maiden,
Give me this foaming draught also,
Give me this health-laden look!

[1] In the original, *Schwager*, which has the twofold meaning of *brother-in-law* and *postilion*.

Down, now! quicker still, down!
See where the sun sets!
Ere he sets, ere old age
Seize me in the morass,
Ere my toothless jaws mumble,
And my useless limbs totter;
While drunk with his farewell beam
Hurl me, — a fiery sea
Foaming still in mine eye, —
Hurl me, while dazzled and reeling,
Down to the gloomy portal of hell.

Blow, then, gossip, thy horn,
Speed on with echoing trot,
So that Orcus may know we are coming,
So that our host may with joy
Wait at the door to receive us.

THE SEA-VOYAGE.

Many a day and night my bark stood ready laden;
Waiting fav'ring winds, I sat with true friends round me,
Pledging me to patience and to courage,
In the haven.

And they spoke thus with impatience twofold:
"Gladly pray we for thy rapid passage,
Gladly for thy happy voyage; fortune
In the distant world is waiting for thee,
In our arms thou'lt find thy prize, and love, too,
When returning."

And when morning came arose an uproar,
And the sailors' joyous shouts awoke us;
All was stirring, all was living, moving,
Bent on sailing with the first kind zephyr.

And the sails soon in the breezes are swelling,
And the sun with fiery love invites us;
Filled the sails are, clouds on high are floating,
On the shore each friend exultant raises
Songs of hope, in giddy joy expecting
Joy the voyage through, as on the morn of sailing,
And the earliest starry nights so radiant.

But by God-sent changing winds ere long he's driven
Sideways from the course he had intended,
And he feigns as though he would surrender,
While he gently striveth to outwit them,
To his goal, e'en when thus pressed, still faithful.

But from out the damp gray distance rising,
Softly now the storm proclaims its advent,
Presseth down each bird upon the waters,
Presseth down the throbbing heart of mortals,
And it cometh. At its stubborn fury,
Wisely every sail the seaman striketh;
With the anguish-laden ball are sporting
Wind and water.

And on yonder shore are gathered standing,
Friends and lovers, trembling for the bold one:
"Why, alas, remained he here not with us!
Ah, the tempest! Cast away by fortune!
Must the good one perish in this fashion?
Might not he perchance . . . Ye great immortals!"

Yet he, like a man, stands by his rudder;
With the bark are sporting wind and water,
Wind and water sport not with his bosom:
On the fierce deep looks he, as a master, —
In his gods, or shipwrecked, or safe landed,
Trusting ever.

THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE.

In search of prey once raised his pinions
An eaglet;
A huntsman's arrow came, and reft
His right wing of all motive power.
Headlong he fell into a myrtle grove,
For three long days on anguish fed,
In torment writhed
Throughout three long, three weary nights;
And then was cured,
Thanks to all-healing Nature's
Soft, omnipresent balm.
He crept away from out the copse,
And stretched his wing — alas!
Lost is all power of flight —
He scarce can lift himself
From off the ground
To catch some mean, unworthy prey,
And rests, deep-sorrowing,
On the low rock beside the stream.
Up to the oak he looks,
Looks up to heaven,
While in his noble eye there gleams a tear.
Then, rustling through the myrtle boughs, behold,
There comes a wanton pair of doves,
Who settle down, and, nodding, strut
O'er the gold sands beside the stream,
And gradually approach;
Their red-tinged eyes, so full of love,
Soon see the inward-sorrowing one.
The male, inquisitively social, leaps
On the next bush, and looks
Upon him kindly and complacently.
"Thou sorrowest," murmurs he:
"Be of good cheer, my friend!

All that is needed for calm happiness
Hast thou not here!
Hast thou not pleasure in the golden bough
That shields thee from the day's fierce glow?
Canst thou not raise thy breast to catch,
On the soft moss beside the brook,
The sun's last rays at even?
Here thou mayest wander through the flowers'
fresh dew,
Pluck from the overflow
The forest-trees provide,
The choicest food, — mayest quench
Thy light thirst at the silvery spring.
O friend, true happiness
Lies in contentedness,
And that contentedness
Finds everywhere enough."
"O wise one!" said the eagle, while he sank
In deep and ever deepening thought —
"O Wisdom! like a dove thou speakest!"

GANYMEDE.

How, in the light of morning,
Round me thou glowest,
Spring, thou beloved one!
With thousand-varying loving bliss
The sacred emotions
Born of thy warmth eternal
Press 'gainst my bosom,
Thou endlessly fair one!
Could I but hold thee clasped
Within mine arms!

Ah! upon thy bosom
Lay I, pining,

And then thy flowers, thy grass,
Were pressing against my heart.
Thou coolest the burning
Thirst of my bosom,
Beauteous morning breeze!
The nightingale then calls me
Sweetly from out of the misty vale.
I come, I come!
Whither? Ah, whither?

Up, up, lies my course.
While downward the clouds
Are hovering, the clouds
Are bending to meet yearning love.
For me,
Within thine arms
Upwards!
Embraced and embracing!
Upwards into thy bosom,
O Father, all-loving!

PROMETHEUS.

Cover thy spacious heavens, Zeus,
With clouds of mist,
And like the boy who lops
The thistles' heads,
Disport with oaks and mountain-peaks;
Yet thou must leave
My earth still standing;
My cottage, too, which was not raised by thee;
Leave me my hearth,
Whose kindly glow
By thee is envied.

I know nought poorer
Under the sun, than ye gods!

Ye nourish painfully,
With sacrifices
And votive prayers,
Your majesty;
Ye would e'en starve,
If children and beggars
Were not trusting fools.

While yet a child,
And ignorant of life,
I turned my wandering gaze
Up toward the sun, as if with him
There were an ear to hear my wailings,
A heart, like mine,
To feel compassion for distress.

Who helped me
Against the Titans' insolence?
Who rescued me from certain death,
From slavery?
Didst thou not do all this thyself,
My sacred glowing heart?
And glowedst, young and good,
Deceived with grateful thanks
To yonder slumbering one?

I honour thee, and why?
Hast thou e'er lightened the sorrows
Of the heavy laden?
Hast thou e'er dried up the tears
Of the anguish-stricken?
Was I not fashioned to be a man
By omnipotent Time,
And by eternal Fate,
Masters of me and thee?
Didst thou e'er fancy

That life I should learn to hate,
And fly to deserts,
Because not all
My blossoming dreams grew ripe?

Here sit I, forming mortals
After my image;
A race resembling me,
To suffer, to weep,
To enjoy, to be glad,
And thee to scorn,
As I!

LIMITS OF HUMANITY.

When the Creator,
The Great, the Eternal,
Sows with indifferent
Hand, from the rolling
Clouds, o'er the earth, His
Lightnings in blessing,
I kiss the nethermost
Hem of His garment,
Lowly inclining
In infantine awe.
For never against
The immortals, a mortal
May measure himself.
Upwards aspiring,
He toucheth the stars with his forehead,
Then do his insecure feet
Stumble and totter and reel;
Then do the cloud and the tempest
Make him their pastime and sport.

Let him with sturdy,
Sinewy limbs,

Tread the enduring
Firm-seated earth;
Aiming no further, than
The oak or the vine to compare!

What doth distinguish
Gods from mankind?
This! Multitudinous
Billows roll ever
Before the immortals,
An infinite stream.
We by a billow
Are lifted — a billow
Engulfs us — we sink,
And are heard of no more.

A little round
Encircles our life,
And races unnumbered
Extend through the ages,
Linked by existence's
Infinite chain.

THE GODLIKE.

Noble be man,
Helpful and good!
For that alone
Distinguisheth him
From all the beings
Unto us known.

Hail to the beings,
Unknown and glorious,
Whom we forebode!
From *his* example

Learn we to know them!
For unfeeling
Nature is ever.

On bad and on good
The sun alike shineth;
And on the wicked,
As on the best,
The moon and stars gleam.

Tempest and torrent,
Thunder and hail,
Roar on their path,
Seizing the while,
As they haste onward,
One after another.

Even so, fortune
Gropes 'mid the throng —
Innocent boyhood's
Curly head seizing, —
Seizing the hoary
Head of the sinner.

After laws mighty,
Brazen, eternal,
Must all we mortals
Finish the circuit
Of our existence.

Man, and man only
Can do the impossible;
He 'tis distinguisheth,
Chooseth and judgeth;
He to the moment
Endurance can lend.

He and he only
The good can reward,
The bad can he punish,
Can heal and can save;
All that wanders and strays
Can usefully blend.

And we pay homage
To the immortals
As though they were men,
And did in the great,
What the best, in the small,
Does or might do.

Be the man that is noble,
Both helpful and good,
Unwearily forming
The right and the useful,
A type of those beings
Our mind hath foreshadowed.

THE GERMAN PARNASSUS.

'Neath the shadow
Of these bushes
On the meadow
Where the cooling water gushes,
Phœbus gave me, when a boy,
All life's fulness to enjoy.
So, in silence, as the God
Bade them with his sovereign nod,
Sacred Muses trained my days
To his praise, —
With the bright and silvery flood
Of Parnassus stirred my blood,

And the seal so pure and chaste
By them on my lips was placed.

With her modest pinions, see,
Philomel encircles me!
In these bushes, in yon grove,
  Calls she to her sister-throng,
  And their heavenly choral song
Teaches me to dream of love.

Fulness waxes in my breast
Of emotions social, blest;
Friendship's nurtured, — love awakes, —
And the silence Phœbus breaks
Of his mountains, of his vales,
Sweetly blow the balmy gales;
All for whom he shows affection,
Who are worthy his protection,
Gladly follow his direction.

This one comes with joyous bearing
  And with open, radiant gaze;
That a sterner look is wearing,
This one, scarcely cured, with daring
  Wakes the strength of former days;
For the sweet, destructive flame
Pierced his marrow and his frame.
That which Amor stole before
Phœbus only can restore.
Peace, and joy, and harmony,
Aspirations pure and free.

Brethren, rise ye!
Numbers prize ye!
Deeds of worth resemble they.
  Who can better than the bard

Guide a friend when gone astray?
If his duty he regard,
More he'll do, than others may.

Yes! afar I hear them sing!
Yes! I hear them touch the string,
And with mighty godlike stroke
Right and duty they inspire
And evoke,
As they sing and wake the lyre,
Tendencies of noblest worth,
To each type of strength give birth.

Phantasies of sweetest power
Flower
Round about on every bough,
Bending now
Like the magic wood of old,
'Neath the fruit that gleams like gold.

What we feel and what we view
In the land of highest bliss, —
This dear soil, a sun like this, —
Lures the best of women too.
And the Muses' breathings blest
Rouse the maiden's gentle breast,
Tune the throat to minstrelsy,
And with cheeks of beauteous dye,
Bid it sing a worthy song,
Sit the sister-band among;
And their strains grow softer still,
As they vie with earnest will.

One amongst the band betimes
Goes to wander
By the beeches, 'neath the limes,
Yonder seeking, finding yonder

That which in the morning-grove
She had lost through roguish Love,
All her breast's first aspirations,
And her heart's calm meditations.
To the shady wood so fair
  Gently stealing,
Takes she that which man can ne'er
  Duly merit, — each soft feeling, —
Disregards the noontide ray
And the dew at close of day, —
  In the plain her path she loses.
Ne'er disturb her on her way!
  Seek her silently, ye Muses!

Shouts I hear, wherein the sound
Of the waterfall is drowned.
From the grove loud clamours rise,
Strange the tumult, strange the cries.
See I rightly? Can it be?
To the very sanctuary,
Lo, an impious troop in-hies!

O'er the land
Streams the band;
Hot desire,
Drunken-fire
In their gaze
Wildly plays, —
Makes the hair
Bristle there.
And the troop,
With fell swoop,
Women, men,
Coming then,
Ply their blows
And expose,
Void of shame,
All the frame.
Iron shot,
Fierce and hot,
Strike with fear
On the ear;
All they slay
On their way,
O'er the land
Pours the band;
All take flight
At their sight

Ah, o'er every plant they rush!
Ah, their cruel footsteps crush
All the flowers that fill their path!
Who will dare to stem their wrath?

Brethren, let us venture all!
Virtue in your pure cheek glows.
Phœbus will attend our call
When he sees our heavy woes;
And that we may have aright
Weapons suited to the fight,
He the mountain shaketh now —
From its brow
Rattling down
Stone on stone
Through the thicket spread appear.
Brethren, seize them! Wherefore fear?
Now the villain crew assail,
As though with a storm of hail,
And expel the strangers wild
From these regions soft and mild
Where the sun has ever smiled!

What strange wonder do I see?
Can it be?
All my limbs of power are reft,
And all strength my hand has left.
Can it be?
None are strangers that I see!
And our brethren 'tis who go
On before, the way to show!
Oh, the reckless, impious ones!
How they, with their jarring tones,
Beat the time, as on they hie!
Quick, my brethren! — let us fly!

To the rash ones, yet a word!
Ay, my voice shall now be heard,
As a peal of thunder, strong!
  Words as poets' arms were made, —
  When the god will be obeyed,
Follow fast his darts ere long.

Was it possible that ye
Thus your godlike dignity
Should forget? The Thyrsus rude
  Must a heavy burden feel
  To the hand but wont to steal
O'er the lyre in gentle mood.
From the sparkling waterfalls,
From the brook that purling calls,
Shall Silenus' loathsome beast
Be allowed at will to feast?
Aganippe's[1] wave he sips
With profane and spreading lips, —
With ungainly feet stamps madly,
Till the waters flow on sadly.

Fain I'd think myself deluded
  In the saddening sounds I hear;
From the holy glades secluded
  Hateful tones assail the ear.
Laughter wild (exchange how mournful!)
  Takes the place of love's sweet dream;
Women-haters and the scornful
  In exulting chorus scream.
Nightingale and turtle-dove
  Fly their nests so warm and chaste,
And, inflamed with sensual love,
  Holds the Faun the Nymph embraced.

[1] A spring in Bœotia, which arose out of Mount Helicon, and was sacred to Apollo and the Muses.

Here a garment's torn away,
Scoffs succeed their sated bliss,
While the god, with angry ray,
Looks upon each impious kiss.

Vapour, smoke, as from a fire,
And advancing clouds I view;
Chords not only grace the lyre,
For the bow its chords hath, too.
Even the adorer's heart
Dreads the wild advancing band,
For the flames that round them dart
Show the fierce destroyer's hand.
Oh, neglect not what I say,
For I speak it lovingly!
From our boundaries haste away,
From the god's dread anger fly!
Cleanse once more the holy place,
Turn the savage train aside!
Earth contains upon its face
Many a spot unsanctified;
Here we only prize the good.
Stars unsullied round us burn.
If ye, in repentant mood,
From your wanderings would return,
If ye fail to find the bliss
That ye found with *us* of yore,—
Or when lawless mirth like this
Gives your hearts delight no more,—
Then return in pilgrim guise,
Gladly up the mountain go,
While your strains repentant rise,
And our brethren's advent show.

Let a new-born wreath entwine
Solemnly your temples round;

Rapture glows in hearts divine
When a long-lost sinner's found.
Swifter e'en the Lethe's flood
Round Death's silent house can play,
Every error of the good
Will love's chalice wash away.
All will haste your steps to meet,
As ye come in majesty, —
Men your blessing will entreat; —
Ours ye thus will doubly be!

LOVE'S DISTRESSES.

Who will hear me? Whom shall I lament to?
Who would pity me that heard my sorrows?
Ah, the lip that erst so many raptures
Used to taste, and used to give responsive,
Now is cloven, and it pains me sorely;
And it is not thus severely wounded
By my mistress having caught me fiercely,
And then gently bitten me, intending
To secure her friend more firmly to her:
No, my tender lip is cracked thus, only
By the winds, o'er rime and frost proceeding,
Pointed, sharp, unloving, having met me.
Now the noble grape's bright juice commingled
With the bee's sweet juice, upon the fire
Of my hearth shall ease me of my torment.
Ah, what use will all this be, if with it
Love adds not a drop of his own balsam?

LILI'S MENAGERIE.

[Goethe describes this much-admired poem, which he wrote in honour of his love Lili, as being "designed to change his surrender of her into despair, by drolly-fretful images."]

THERE'S no menagerie, I vow,
Excels my Lili's at this minute;
She keeps the strangest creatures in it,
And catches them, she knows not how.
Oh, how they hop, and run, and rave,
And their clipped pinions wildly wave, —
Poor princes, who must all endure
The pangs of love that nought can cure.

What is the fairy's name? — Is it Lili? — Ask not me!
Give thanks to Heaven if she's unknown to thee.

Oh, what a cackling, what a shrieking
When near the door she takes her stand,
With her food-basket in her hand!
Oh, what a croaking, what a squeaking!
Alive all the trees and the bushes appear,
While to her feet whole troops draw near;
The very fish within the water clear
Splash with impatience and their heads protrude;
And then she throws around the food
With such a look! — the very gods delighting
(To say nought of beasts). There begins, then, a biting,
A picking, a pecking, a sipping,
And each o'er the legs of another is tripping,
And pushing, and pressing, and flapping,
And chasing, and fuming, and snapping,
And all for one small piece of bread,
To which, though dry, her fair hands give a taste,
As though it in ambrosia had been placed.

And then her look! the tone
With which she calls: Pipi! Pipi!

Would draw Jove's eagle from his throne;
Yes, Venus' turtle-doves, I ween,
And the vain peacock e'en,
Would come, I swear,
Soon as that tone had reached them through the air.

E'en from a forest dark had she
  Enticed a bear, unlicked, ill-bred,
  And, by her wiles alluring, led
To join the gentle company,
Until as tame as they was he:
(Up to a certain point, be it understood!)
How fair, and ah! how good
She seemed to be! I would have drained my blood
  To water e'en her flow'rets sweet.

"Thou sayest: *I!* Who? How? And where?" —
Well, to be plain, good sirs — I am the bear;
    In a net apron, caught, alas!
  Chained by a silk thread at her feet.
    But how this wonder came to pass
I'll tell some day if ye are curious;
Just now, my temper's much too furious.

  Ah, when I'm in the corner placed,
  And hear afar the creatures snapping,
  And see the flipping and the flapping,
    I turn around
    With growling sound,
  And backward run a step in haste,
    And look around
    With growling sound,
  Then run again a step in haste,
    And to my former post go round.

  But suddenly my anger grows,
  A mighty spirit fills my nose,

"The Monster's 'Droll Enough'"

Photogravure from Painting by F. Kirchbach

My inward feelings all revolt.
A creature such as thou! a dolt!
Pipi, a squirrel able nuts to crack!
I bristle up my shaggy back,
Unused a slave to be.
I'm laughed at by each trim and upstart tree
To scorn. The bowling green I fly,
With neatly-mown and well-kept grass;
The box makes faces as I pass, —
Into the darkest thicket hasten I,
Hoping to 'scape from the ring,
Over the palings to spring!

Vainly I leap and climb;
I feel a leaden spell
That pinions me as well,
And when I'm fully wearied out in time,
I lay me down beside some mock-cascade,
And roll myself half dead, and foam, and cry,
And, ah! no Oreads hear my sigh,
Excepting those of china made!

But, ah, with sudden power,
In all my members blissful feelings reign!
'Tis she who singeth yonder in her bower!
I hear that darling, darling voice again.
The air is warm, and teems with fragrance clear,
Sings she perchance for me alone to hear?
I haste, and trample down the shrubs amain;
The trees make way, the bushes all retreat,
And so — the beast is lying at her feet.

She looks at him: "The monster's droll enough!
He's, for a bear, too mild,
Yet, for a dog, too wild,
So shaggy, clumsy, rough!"
Up in his back she gently strokes her foot;
He thinks himself in Paradise.

What feelings through his seven senses shoot!
  But she looks on with careless eyes.
I lick her soles, and kiss her shoes,
  As gently as a bear well may;
Softly I rise, and with a clever ruse
  Leap on her knee. — On a propitious day
She suffers it; my ears then tickles she,
  And hits me a hard blow in wanton play;
I growl with new-born ecstasy;
Then speaks she in a sweet vain jest, I wot;
"*Allons tout doux! eh! la menotte!*
Et faites serviteur
Comme un joli seigneur."
Thus she proceeds with sport and glee;
  Hope fills the oft-deluded beast;
Yet if one moment he would lazy be,
  Her fondness all at once hath ceased.

She doth a flask of balsam fire possess,
  Sweeter than honey bees can make,
  One drop of which she'll on her finger take,
When softened by his love and faithfulness,
  Wherewith her monster's raging thirst to slake;
Then leaves me to myself, and flies at last,
And I, unbound, yet prisoned fast
By magic, follow in her train,
Seek for her, tremble, fly again.
The hapless creature thus tormenteth she,
  Regardless of his pleasure or his woe;
Ha! oft half-opened does she leave the door for me,
  And sideways looks to learn if I will fly or no;
And I — O gods! your hands alone
Can end the spell that's o'er me thrown;
Free me, and gratitude my heart will fill;
  And yet from heaven ye send me down no aid —
  Not quite in vain doth life my limbs pervade:
I feel it! Strength is left me still.

TO CHARLOTTE.

Midst the noise of merriment and glee,
'Midst full many a sorrow, many a care,
Charlotte, I remember, *we* remember thee,
How at evening's hour so fair,
Thou a kindly hand didst reach us,
When thou, in some happy place
Where more fair is Nature's face,
Many a lightly-hidden trace
Of a spirit loved didst teach us.

Well 'tis that thy worth I rightly knew, —
That I, in the hour when first we met,
While the first impression filled me yet,
Called thee then a girl both good and true.

Reared in silence, calmly, knowing nought,
On the world we suddenly are thrown;
Hundred thousand billows round us sport;
All things charm us — many please alone,
Many grieve us, and as hour on hour is stealing,
To and fro our restless natures sway;
First we feel, and then we find each feeling
By the changeful world-stream borne away.

Well I know, we oft within us find
Many a hope and many a smart.
Charlotte, who can know our mind?
Charlotte, who can know our heart?
Ah! 'twould fain be understood, 'twould fain o'erflow
In some creature's fellow-feelings blest,
And, with trust, in twofold measure know
All the grief and joy in Nature's breast.

Then thine eye is oft around thee cast,
  But in vain, for all seems closed for ever;
Thus the fairest part of life is madly passed
  Free from storm, but resting never;
To thy sorrow thou'rt to-day repelled
  By what yesterday obeyed thee.
Can that world by thee be worthy held
  Which so oft betrayed thee?

Which 'mid all thy pleasures and thy pains,
  Lived in selfish, unconcerned repose?
See, the soul its secret cells regains,
  And the heart — makes haste to close.
Thus found I thee, and gladly went to meet thee;
  "She's worthy of all love!" I cried,
And prayed that Heaven with purest bliss might greet thee,
  Which in thy friend it richly hath supplied.

MORNING LAMENT.

Oh, thou cruel, deadly-lovely maiden,
Tell me what great sin have I committed,
That thou keepest me to the rack thus fastened,
That thou hast thy solemn promise broken?

'Twas but yestere'en that thou with fondness
Pressed my hand, and these sweet accents murmured:
"Yes, I'll come, I'll come when morn approacheth,
Come, my friend, full surely to thy chamber."
On the latch I left my doors, unfastened,
Having first with care tried all the hinges,
And rejoiced right well to find they creaked not.

What a night of expectation passed I!
For I watched, and every chime I numbered;

If perchance I slept a few short moments,
Still my heart remained awake for ever,
And awoke me from my gentle slumbers.

Yes, then blessed I night's o'erhanging darkness,
That so calmly covered all things round me;
I enjoyed the universal silence,
While I listened ever in the silence,
If perchance the slightest sounds were stirring.

"Had she only thoughts, *my* thoughts resembling,
Had she only feelings, like *my* feelings,
She would not await the dawn of morning,
But, ere this, would surely have been with me."

Skipped a kitten on the floor above me,
Scratched a mouse a panel in the corner,
Was there in the house the slightest motion,
Ever hoped I that I heard thy footstep,
Ever thought I that I heard thee coming.

And so lay I long, and ever longer,
And already was the daylight dawning,
And both here and there were signs of movement.

"Is it *yon* door? Were it *my* door only!"
In my bed I leaned upon my elbow,
Looking toward the door, now half-apparent,
If perchance it might not be in motion.
Both the wings upon the latch continued,
On the quiet hinges calmly hanging.

And the day grew bright and brighter ever;
And I heard my neighbour's door unbolted,
As he went to earn his daily wages,
And ere long I heard the wagons rumbling,
And the city gates were also opened,

While the market-place, in every corner,
Teemed with life and bustle and confusion.

In the house was going now and coming
Up and down the stairs, and doors were creaking
Backwards now, now forwards, — footsteps clattered,
Yet, as though it were a thing all-living,
From my cherished hope I could not tear me.

When at length the sun, in hated splendour,
Fell upon my walls, upon my windows,
Up I sprang, and hastened to the garden,
There to blend my breath, so hot and yearning,
With the cool refreshing morning breezes,
And, it might be, even there to meet thee:
But I cannot find thee in the arbour,
Or the avenue of lofty lindens.

THE VISIT.

To-DAY I thought to steal upon my darling,
But the door was closed of her apartments.
Of a key, however, I am master;
Noislessly I glide within the doorway.

In the salon found I not the maiden,
Found the maiden not within the parlour,
But on tiptoe entering her chamber,
There I find her, sunk in graceful slumber,
In her robes, upon the sofa lying.
At her work had slumber overtaken her;
And the netting, with the needles, rested
'Twixt the fair hands that hung crosswise folded.
Silently I sate me down beside her,
And awhile I mused if I should wake her.

Awed me then the peace so sweet and holy,
Which upon her drooping eyelids rested:
On her lips abode a trustful quiet,
Beauty on her cheeks, the home of beauty;
And the tranquil movement of her bosom
Showed how innocent the heart that moved it.
All her limbs, so gracefully reposing,
Lay relaxed by sleep's delicious balsam:
There I sat enraptured, and the vision
Curbed the impulse I had felt to wake her,
With a spell that close and closer bound me.

"O my love," I murmured, "and can slumber,
Which unmasks whate'er is false and formal,
Can he injure thee not, nor unravel
Aught to shake thy lover's fondest fancy?

"Thy dear eyes are closed, those eyes so tender —
Eyes, which only lifted are enchantment,
Those sweet lips, oh, lips so sweet they stir not,
Stir not nor for speech, nor yet for kisses!
All unloosened is the magic cincture
Of thine arms, that otherwhiles enclasp me,
And the hand, the dainty sweet companion
Of all best endearments, void of motion.
Were my thoughts of thee delusion merely —
Were my love for thee but self-deception,
I must now discern the truth, when Amor
Stands beside me thus, with eyes unbandaged."

Long while thus I sat, with heart elated,
Thinking of her worth and my devotion;
Sleeping, she with rapture so had filled me,
That I did not venture to awake her.

Placing softly down upon her table
Two pomegranates and two half-blown rosebuds,

Gently, gently, glide I from the chamber.
When she opes her eyes, my own heart's darling,
And they rest upon my gift, with wonder
Will she muse, how such fine token ever
There should be, and yet her door unopened.

When to-night again I see my angel,
Oh, how she will joy, and twofold pay me,
For this tribute of my heart's devotion!

THE MUSAGETES.

Often in the winter midnight,
Prayed I to the blessed Muses —
"Here is not the red of morning,
Tardy is the day in breaking;
Light for me, ye blessed Muses,
Light the lamp of inspiration,
That its mellow ray may serve me,
'Stead of Phœbus and Aurora!"
But they left me to my slumber,
Dull, and spiritless, and torpid;
And the morning's lazy leisure
Ushered in a useless day.

Then when spring began to kindle,
Thus the nightingales I conjured —
"Sweetest nightingales, oh, warble,
Warble early at my window!
Wake me from the heavy slumber
That in magic fetters holds me!"
And the love-o'erflowing singers
Sang all night around my window
All their rarest melodies;
Kept awake the soul within me;

Gave me trances, aspirations,
Glimpses of divine emotion,
Soothing, melting, undefined.
So the night passed lightly over,
And Aurora found me sleeping,
Scarce I wakened with the sun.

Lastly, came the glorious summer;
What aroused me then from dreaming,
At the earliest dawn of morning?
'Twas the buzzing of the flies!
They are touched by no compassion;
Ruthlessly they do their duty,
Though the half-awakened sleeper
Greets them with a malediction.
Unabashed their clan they summon,
And the humming swarm is vocal,
And they banish from my eyelids
All the luxury of sleep.

Straightway start I from my pillow,
Leave the close-beleaguered chamber,
Sally out to seek the Muses,
In the haunts to them are dearest.
And I find them 'neath the beeches,
Waiting for me, sometimes chiding,
For my over-long delay.
Thus I owe you, libelled insects,
Thanks for many hours of rapture.
Dullards may indeed abuse you,
Since you wake them to sensation;
But the poet ought to prize you,
And I thank you, as a poet,
Ranking you, beyond all others,
As the ushers to the Muse.

THE WATER-MAN.

[This ballad cannot be claimed as one of Goethe's original compositions, it being a very close translation of an old Danish ballad, entitled, "The Mer-man, and Marstig's daughter." As, however, it appears in all the collections, and has often been quoted as a favourable specimen of Goethe's skill in assuming the simple style of the popular Northern ballads, we have deemed it advisable to give a version.]

"Oh, mother! rede me well, I pray;
How shall I woo me yon winsome May?"

She has built him a horse of the water clear,
The saddle and bridle of sea-sand were.

He has donned the garb of a knight so gay,
And to Mary's Kirk he has ridden away.

He tied his steed to the chancel door,
And he stepped round the Kirk three times and four.

He has boune him into the Kirk, and all
Drew near to gaze on him, great and small.

The priest he was standing in the quire;—
"What gay young gallant comes branking here?"

The winsome maid, to herself said she,
"Oh, were that gay young gallant for me!"

He stepped o'er one stool, he stepped o'er two;
"Oh, maiden, plight me thine oath so true!"

He stepped o'er three stools, he stepped o'er four;
"Wilt be mine, sweet May, for evermore?"

She gave him her hand of the drifted snow —
"Here hast thou my troth, and with thee I'll go."

They went from the Kirk with the bridal train,
They danced in glee and they danced full fain;

They danced them down to the salt-sea strand,
And they left them standing there, hand in hand.

"Now wait thee, love, with my steed so free,
And the bonniest bark I'll bring for thee."

And when they passed to the white, white sand,
The ships came sailing on to the land;

But when they were out in the midst of the sound,
Down went they all in the deep profound!

Long, long on the shore, when the winds were high,
They heard from the waters the maiden's cry.

I rede ye, damsels, as best I can —
Tread not the dance with the Water-Man!

PSYCHE.

THE Muses, maiden sisters, chose
To teach poor Psyche arts poetic;
But, spite of all their rules æsthetic,
She never could emerge from prose.

No dulcet sounds escaped her lyre,
E'en when the summer nights were nigh;
Till Cupid came, with glance of fire,
And taught her all the mystery.

IN ABSENCE.

And shall I then regain thee never?
My beautiful! And art thou flown?
Still in my ears resounds for ever
Thy every word, thy every tone.

As through the air, when morn is springing,
The wanderer peers in vain, to trace
The lark, that o'er him high is singing,
Hid in the azure depth of space;

So, love, through field and forest lonely
My sad eyes roam in quest of thee;
My songs are tuned to thee, thee only;
Oh, come, my own love, back to me!

THE MAGIC NET.

Do I see a contest yonder?
See I miracles or pastimes?
Beauteous urchins, five in number,
'Gainst five sisters fair contending,—
Measured is the time they're beating —
At a bright enchantress' bidding.
Glittering spears by some are wielded,
Threads are others nimbly twining,
So that in their snares, the weapons,
One would think, must needs be captured.
Soon, in truth, the spears are prisoned:
Yet they, in the gentle war-dance,
One by one escape their fetters
In the row of loops so tender,
That make haste to seize a free one
Soon as they release a captive.

So with contests, strivings, triumphs,
Flying now, and now returning,
Is an artful net soon woven,
In its whiteness like the snowflakes,
That, from light amid the darkness,
Draw their streaky lines so varied,
As e'en colours scarce can draw them.

Who shall now receive that garment
Far beyond all others wished-for?
Whom our much-loved mistress favour
As her own acknowledged servant?
I am blest by kindly Fortune's
Tokens true, in silence prayed for!
And I feel myself held captive,
To her service now devoted.

Yet, e'en while I, thus enraptured,
Thus adorned, am proudly wandering,
See! yon wantons are entwining,
Void of strife with secret ardour,
Other nets, each fine and finer,
Threads of twilight interweaving,
Moonbeams sweet, night-violets' balsam.

Ere the net is noticed by us,
Is a happier one imprisoned,
Whom we, one and all, together
Greet with envy and with blessings.

THE CHURCH WINDOW.

The minster window, richly glowing,
With many a gorgeous stain and dye,
Itself a parable, is showing,
The might, the power of Poesy.

Look on it from the outer square,
And it is only dark and dreary;
Yon blockhead always views it there,
And swears its aspect makes him weary.

But enter once the holy portal —
What splendour bursts upon the eye!
There symbols, deeds, and forms immortal,
Are blazing forth in majesty.

Be thankful you, who have the gift
To read and feel each sacred story;
And oh, be reverent when you lift
Your eyes to look on heavenly glory!

THE CAVALIER'S CHOICE.

[This lively little ballad occurs in one of Goethe's operas, very charming compositions, which probably are less read than they deserve. It is not altogether original, being evidently founded on a popular Scottish ditty, called indiscriminately "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship," or the "Laird of Roslin's Daughter," in which precisely the same questions are propounded and answered. Truth compels us to say that, in point of merit, the superiority lies with the Scottish ballad. This being a case of disputed property, or rather commonty, the translator has allowed himself more license in rendering than has been used in any other instance in the present collection.]

It was a gallant cavalier
Of honour and renown,
And all to seek a ladye-love
He rode from town to town.
Till at a widow-woman's door
He drew the rein so free;
For at her side the knight espied
Her comely daughters three.

Well might he gaze upon them,
For they were fair and tall;
Ye never have seen fairer maids,
In bower nor yet in hall.
Small marvel if the gallant's heart
Beat quicker in his breast;
'Twas hard to choose, and hard to lose —
How might he wale the best?

"Now, maidens, pretty maidens mine,
Who'll rede me riddles three?
And she who answers best of all
Shall be mine own ladye!"
I ween they blushed as maidens do,
When such rare words they hear —
"Now speak thy riddles if thou wilt,
Thou gay young cavalier!"

"What's longer than the longest path?
First tell ye that to me;
And tell me what is deeper yet,
Than is the deepest sea?
And tell me what is louder far,
Than is the loudest horn?
And tell me what hath sharper point,
Than e'en the sharpest thorn?

"And tell me what is greener yet,
Than greenest grass on hill?
And tell me what is crueller
Than a wicked woman's will?"
The eldest and the second maid,
They mused and thought awhile;
But the youngest she looked upward,
And spoke with merry smile.

"Oh, love is surely longer far,
Than the longest paths that be;
And hell, they say, is deeper yet,
Than is the deepest sea;
The roll of thunder is more loud,
Than is the loudest horn;
And hunger it is worse to bear
Than sharpest wound of thorn;

"The copper sweat is greener yet,
Than is the grass on hill;
And the foul fiend he is crueller
Than any woman's will."
He leapt so lightly from his steed,
He took her by the hand;
"Sweet maid, my riddles thou hast read,
Be lady of my land!"

The eldest and the second maid,
They pondered and were dumb,
And there, perchance, are waiting yet
Till another wooer come.
Then, maidens, take this warning word,
Be neither slow nor shy,
But always, when a lover speaks,
Look kindly, and reply.

THE ARTIST'S MORNING SONG.

My dwelling is the Muses' home —
What matters it how small?
And here, within my heart, is set
The holiest place of all.

When, wakened by the early sun,
I rise from slumbers sound,

I see the ever-living forms
In radiance grouped around.

I pray, and songs of thanks and praise
Are more than half my prayer,
With simple notes of music, tuned
To some harmonious air.

I bow before the altar then,
And read, as well I may,
From noble Homer's master-work,
The lesson for the day.

He takes me to the furious fight,
Where lion-warriors throng;
Where god-descended heroes whirl
In iron cars along.

And steeds go down before the cars;
And round the cumbered wheel,
Both friend and foe are rolling now,
All blood from head to heel!

Then comes the champion of them all,
Pelides' friend is he,
And crashes through the dense array,
Though thousands ten they be!

And ever smites that fiery sword
Through helmet, shield, and mail,
Until he falls by craft divine,
Where might could not prevail.

Down from the glorious pile he rolls,
Which he himself had made,
And foemen trample on the limbs
From which they shrank afraid.

Then start I up, with arms in hand,
What arms the painter bears;
And soon along my kindling wall
The fight at Troy appears.

On! on again! The wrath is here
Of battle rolling red;
Shield strikes on shield, and sword on helm,
And dead men fall on dead!

I throng into the inner press,
Where loudest rings the din;
For there, around their hero's corpse,
Fight on his furious kin!

A rescue! rescue! bear him hence
Into the leaguer near;
Pour balsam in his glorious wounds,
And weep above his bier!

And when from that hot trance I pass,
Great Love, I feel thy charm;
There hangs my lady's picture near —
A picture, yet so warm!

How fair she was, reclining there;
What languish in her look!
How thrilled her glance through all my frame,
The very pencil shook.

Her eyes, her cheeks, her lovely lips,
Were all the world to me;
And in my breast a younger life
Rose wild and wantonly.

Oh! turn again, and bide thee here,
Nor fear such rude alarms;

How could I think of battles more
With thee within my arms!

But thou shalt lend thy perfect form
To all I fashion best;
I'll paint thee first, Madonna-wise,
The infant on thy breast.

I'll paint thee as a startled nymph,
Myself a following faun;
And still pursue thy flying feet
Across the woodland lawn.

With helm on head, like Mars, I'll lie
By thee, the Queen of Love,
And draw a net around us twain,
And smile on heaven above:

And every god that comes shall pour
His blessings on thy head,
And envious eyes be far away
From that dear marriage-bed!

THE GOBLET.

In my hands I held a brimming goblet,
Sculptured quaintly by the carver's cunning,
Quaffed with eager lips the strong nepenthe,
So at once to drown all care and anguish.

Then came Amor in and found me sitting,
And he smiled a smile of serious sweetness
As in pity of my foolish purpose.

"Friend, I know a vessel nobler, fairer,
Worthy all your soul in it to bury;

Say what guerdon, if to thee I give it,
Fill it for thee with a rarer nectar?"

Oh, he kept his promise, and how truly!
Lida, when with thy dear love he blessed me —
Me, that for thy sake had long been pining.

When I clasp thy beauties to my bosom,
And from thy fond lips, so fond and faithful,
Drink the balm of long, long stored affection,
Thus entranced, I commune with my spirit.

"No; has never God, save Amor, fashioned
Vessel such as this, nor e'er possessed it!
Forms so glorious ne'er were shaped by Vulcan,
With his finest soul-enprompted mallet.

"On the leaf-clad mountains may Lyæus
With his fauns, the hoariest, the sagest,
Cull the clusters of the daintiest savour,
Yea, may guide the mystic fermentation,
Draughts like this not all his skill can furnish!"

FROM AN ALBUM OF 1604.

Hope provides wings to thought, and love to hope.
Rise up to Cynthia, love, when night is clearest,
And say, that as high on her figure changeth,
So, upon earth, my joy decays and grows.
And whisper in her ear with modest softness,
How doubt oft hung its head, and truth oft wept.
If ye are therefore by the loved one chided,
And, oh, ye thoughts, distrustfully inclined,
Answer: 'tis true ye change, but alter not.
As she remains the same, yet changeth ever.

Doubt may invade the heart, but poisons not,
For love is sweeter, by suspicion flavoured.
If it with anger overcasts the eye,
And heaven's bright purity perversely blackens,
Then zephyr-sighs straight scare the clouds away,
And, changed to tears, dissolve them into rain.
Thought, hope, and love remain there as before,
Till Cynthia gleams upon me as of old.

TO THE GRASSHOPPER.

AFTER ANACREON.

[The strong resemblance of this fine poem to Cowley's ode bearing the same name, and beginning, "Happy insect! what can be," will be at once seen.]

Happy art thou, darling insect,
Who upon the trees' tall branches,
By a modest draught inspired,
Singing, like a monarch livest!
Thou possessest as thy portion
All that on the plains thou seest,
All that by the hours is brought thee;
'Mongst the husbandmen thou livest,
As a friend, uninjured by them,
Thou whom mortals love to honour,
Herald sweet of sweet Spring's advent!
Yes, thou'rt loved by all the Muses,
Phœbus' self, too, needs must love thee;
They their silver voices gave thee,
Age can never steal upon thee.
Wise and gentle friend of poets,
Born a creature fleshless, bloodless,
Though Earth's daughter, free from suffering,
To the gods e'en almost equal.

FROM "THE SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER."

[Prefixed to the second edition.]

EVERY youth for love's sweet portion sighs,
Every maiden sighs to win man's love;
Why, alas! should bitter pain arise
From the noblest passion that we prove?

Thou, kind soul, bewailest, lovest him well,
From disgrace his memory's saved by thee;
Lo, his spirit sighs from out its cell:
BE A MAN, NOR SEEK TO FOLLOW ME.

TENDER thoughts and sweet recollection,
That is life in its greatest perfection.

TRILOGY OF PASSION.

I. TO WERTHER.

[This poem, written at the age of seventy-five, was appended to an edition of "Werther," published at that time.]

ONCE more, then, much-wept shadow, thou dost dare
Boldly to face the day's clear light,
To meet me on fresh blooming meadows fair,
And dost not tremble at my sight.
Those happy times appear returned once more,
When on one field we quaffed refreshing dew,
And, when the day's unwelcome toil were o'er,
The farewell sunbeams blessed our ravished view;
Fate bade thee go, — to linger here was mine, —
Going the first, the smaller loss was thine.

The life of man appears a glorious fate:
The day how lovely and the night how great!
And we 'mid Paradise-like raptures placed,
The sun's bright glory scarce have learned to taste,
When strange contending feelings dimly cover,
Now us, and now the forms that round us hover;
One's feelings by no other are supplied,
'Tis dark without, if all is bright inside;
An outward brightness veils my saddened mood,
When Fortune smiles, — how seldom understood!

Now think we that we know her, and with might
A woman's beauteous form instils delight;
The youth, as glad as in his infancy,
The spring-time treads, as though the spring were he.
Ravished, amazed, he asks, how this is done?
He looks around, the world appears his own.
With careless speed he wanders on through space,
Nor walls, nor palaces can check his race;
As some gay flight of birds round tree-tops plays,
So 'tis with him who round his mistress strays;
He seeks from Æther, which he'd leave behind him,
The faithful look that fondly serves to bind him.

Yet first too early warned, and then too late,
He feels his flight restrained, is captured straight;
To meet again is sweet, to part is sad,
Again to meet again is still more glad,
And years in one short moment are enshrined;
But, oh, the harsh farewell is hid behind!

Thou smilest, friend, with fitting thoughts inspired;
By a dread parting was thy fame acquired;
Thy mournful destiny we sorrowed o'er,
For weal and woe thou left'st us evermore,
And then again the passions' wavering force
Drew us along in labyrinthine course;

And we, consumed by constant misery,
At length must part — and parting is to die!
How moving is it, when the minstrel sings,
To 'scape the death that separation brings!
Oh, grant, some god, to one who suffers so,
To tell, half-guilty, his sad tale of woe!

II. ELEGY.

When man had ceased to utter his lament,
A god then let me tell my tale of sorrow.

WHAT hope of once more meeting is there now
In the still-closèd blossoms of this day?
Both heaven and hell thrown open seest thou;
What wavering thoughts within the bosom play! —
No longer doubt! Descending from the sky,
She lifts thee in her arms to realms on high.

And thus thou into Paradise wert brought,
As worthy of a pure and endless life;
Nothing was left, no wish, no hope, no thought,
Here was the boundary of thine inmost strife:
And seeing one so fair, so glorified,
The fount of yearning tears was straightway dried.

No motion stirred the day's revolving wheel,
In their own front the minutes seemed to go;
The evening kiss, a true and binding seal,
Ne'er changing till the morrow's sunlight glow.
The hours resembled sisters as they went,
Yet each one from another different.

The last hour's kiss, so sadly sweet, effaced
A beauteous network of entwining love.
Now on the threshold pause the feet, now haste,
As though a flaming cherub bade them move;

The unwilling eye the dark road wanders o'er
Backward it looks, but closed it sees the door.

And now within itself is closed this breast,
As though it ne'er were open, and as though,
Vying with ev'ry star, no moments blest
Had, in its presence, felt a kindling glow;
Sadness, reproach, repentance, weight of care,
Hang heavy on it in the sultry air.

Is not the world still left? The rocky steeps,
Are they with holy shades no longer crowned?
Grows not the harvest ripe? No longer creeps
The espalier by the stream, — the copse around?
Doth not the wondrous arch of heaven still rise,
Now rich in shape, now shapeless to the eyes?

As, seraph-like, from out the dark clouds' chorus,
With softness woven, graceful, light, and fair,
Resembling Her, in the blue æther o'er us,
A slender figure hovers in the air, —
Thus didst thou see her joyously advance,
The fairest of the fairest in the dance.

Yet but a moment dost thou boldly dare
To clasp an airy form instead of hers;
Back to thine heart! thou'lt find it better there,
For there in changeful guise her image stirs;
What erst was one, to many turneth fast,
In thousand forms, each dearer than the last.

As at the door, on meeting, lingered she,
And step by step my faithful ardour blessed,
For the last kiss herself entreated me,
And on my lips the last, last kiss impressed, —
Thus clearly traced, the loved one's form we view,
With flames engraven on a heart so true, —

A heart that, firm as some embattled tower,
Itself for her, her in itself reveres,
For her rejoices in its lasting power,
Conscious alone, when she herself appears;
Feels itself freer in so sweet a thrall,
And only beats to give her thanks in all.

The power of loving, and all yearning sighs
For love responsive were effaced and drowned;
While longing hope for joyous enterprise
Was formed, and rapid action straightway found
If love can e'er a loving one inspire,
Most lovingly it gave me now its fire;

And 'twas through *her!* — an inward sorrow lay
On soul and body, heavily oppressed;
To mournful phantoms was my sight a prey,
In the drear void of a sad tortured breast;
Now on the well-known threshold Hope hath smiled,
Herself appeareth in the sunlight mild.

Unto the peace of God, which, as we read,
Blesseth us more than reason e'er hath done,
Love's happy peace would I compare indeed,
When in the presence of the dearest one.
There rests the heart, and there the sweetest thought,
The thought of being hers is checked by nought.

In the pure bosom doth a yearning float,
Unto a holier, purer, unknown Being
Its grateful aspirations to devote,
The Ever-Nameless then unriddled seeing;
We call it: piety! — such blest delight
I feel a share in, when before her sight.

Before her sight, as 'neath the sun's hot ray,
Before her breath, as 'neath the spring's soft wind,

In its deep wintry cavern melts away
  Self-love, so long in icy chains confined;
No selfishness and no self-will are nigh,
For at her advent they were forced to fly.

It seems as though she said: "As hours pass by
  They spread before us life with kindly plan;
Small knowledge did the yesterday supply,
  To know the morrow is concealed from man;
And if the thought of evening made me start,
The sun at setting gladdened straight my heart.

"Act, then, as I, and look, with joyous mind,
  The moment in the face; nor linger thou!
Meet it with speed, so fraught with life, so kind
  In action, and in love so radiant now;
Let all things be where thou art, childlike ever,
Thus thou'lt be all, thus thou'lt be vanquished never."

Thou speakest well, methought, for as thy guide
  The moment's favour did a god assign,
And each one feels himself, when by thy side,
  Fate's favourite in a moment so divine;
I tremble at thy look that bids me go,
Why should I care such wisdom vast to know?

Now am I far! And what would best befit
  The present minute? I could scarcely tell;
Full many a rich possession offers it,
  These but offend, and I would fain repel.
Yearnings unquenchable still drive me on,
All counsel, save unbounded tears, is gone.

Flow on, flow on in never-ceasing course,
  Yet may ye never quench my inward fire!
Within my bosom heaves a mighty force,
  Where death and life contend in combat dire.

Medicines may serve the body's pangs to still;
Nought but the spirit fails in strength of will, —

Fails in conception; wherefore fails it so?
A thousand times her image it portrays;
Enchanting now, and now compelled to go,
Now indistinct, now clothed in purest rays!
How could the smallest comfort here be flowing?
The ebb and flood, the coming and the going!

. . . . . .

Leave me here now, my life's companions true!
Leave me alone on rock, in moor and heath;
But courage! open lies the world to you,
The glorious heavens above, the earth beneath;
Observe, investigate, with searching eyes,
And nature will disclose her mysteries.

To me is all, I to myself am lost,
Who the immortals' favourite erst was thought;
They, tempting, sent Pandoras to my cost,
So rich in wealth, with danger far more fraught;
They urged me to those lips, with rapture crowned,
Deserted me, and hurled me to the ground.

III. ATONEMENT.

[Composed, when seventy-four years old, for a Polish lady, who excelled in playing on the pianoforte.]

Passion brings reason, — who can pacify
An anguished heart whose loss hath been so great?
Where are the hours that fled so swiftly by?
In vain the fairest thou didst gain from Fate;
Sad is the soul, confused the enterprise;
The glorious world, how on the sense it dies!

In million tones entwined for evermore
Music with angel-pinions hovers there,
To pierce man's being to its inmost core,
Eternal beauty as its fruit to bear;
The eye grows moist, in yearnings blest reveres
The godlike worth of music as of tears.

And so the lightened heart soon learns to see
That it still lives, and beats, and ought to beat,
Offering itself with joy and willingly,
In grateful payment for a gift so sweet.
And then was felt, — oh, may it constant prove! —
The twofold bliss of music and of love.

THE remembrance of the Good
Keep us ever glad in mood.

The remembrance of the Fair
Makes a mortal rapture share,

The remembrance of one's Love
Blest is, if it constant prove.

The remembrance of the One
Is the greatest joy that's known.

[Written at the age of seventy-seven.]

WHEN I was still a youthful wight,
So full of enjoyment and merry,
The painters used to assert, in spite,
That my features were small — yes, very;
Yet then full many a beauteous child
With true affection upon me smiled.

Now as a graybeard I sit here in state,
By street and by lane held in awe, sirs;
And may be seen, like old Frederick the Great,
On pipebowls, on cups, and on saucers.
Yet the beauteous maidens, they keep afar;
Oh, vision of youth! Oh, golden star!

FOR EVER.

THE happiness that man, whilst prisoned here,
Is wont with heavenly rapture to compare, —
The harmony of Truth, from wavering clear, —
Of Friendship that is free from doubting care, —
The light which in stray thoughts alone can cheer
The wise, — the bard alone in visions fair, —
In my best hours I found in *her* all this,
And made mine own, to mine exceeding bliss.

LINES ON SEEING SCHILLER'S SKULL.

[This curious imitation of the ternary metre of Dante was written at the age of seventy-seven.]

WITHIN a gloomy charnel-house one day
I viewed the countless skulls, so strangely mated,
And of old times I thought that now were gray.
Close packed they stand that once so fiercely hated,
And hardy bones that to the death contended
Are lying crossed, — to lie for ever, fated.
What held those crooked shoulder-blades suspended?
No one now asks; and limbs with vigour fired,
The hand, the foot — their use in life is ended.
Vainly ye sought the tomb for rest when tired;
Peace in the grave may not be yours; ye're driven
Back into daylight by a force inspired;

But none can love the withered husk, though even
A glorious noble kernel it containèd.
To me, an adept, was the writing given
Which not to all its holy sense explainèd.
When 'mid the crowd, their icy shadows flinging,
I saw a form that glorious still remainèd,
And even there, where mould and damp were clinging,
Gave me a blest, a rapture-fraught emotion,
As though from death a living fount were springing.
What mystic joy I felt! What rapt devotion!
That form, how pregnant with a godlike trace!
A look, how did it whirl me toward that ocean
Whose rolling billows mightier shapes embrace!
Mysterious vessel! Oracle how dear!
Even to grasp thee is my hand too base,
Except to steal thee from thy prison here
With pious purpose, and devoutly go
Back to the air, free thoughts, and sunlight clear.
What greater gain in life can man e'er know
Than when God-Nature will to him explain
How into Spirit steadfastness may flow,
How steadfast, too, the Spirit-Born remain.

ON THE DIVAN.

He who knows himself and others
Here will also see,
That the East and West, like brothers,
Parted ne'er shall be.

Thoughtfully to float for ever
'Tween two worlds, be man's endeavour!
So between the East and West
To revolve, be my behest!

ROYAL PRAYER.

Ha, I am the lord of earth! The noble,
Who're in my service, love me.
Ha, I am the lord of earth! The noble,
O'er whom my sway extendeth, love I.
Oh, grant me, God in Heaven, that I may ne'er
Dispense with loftiness and love!

HUMAN FEELINGS.

Ah, ye gods! ye great immortals
In the spacious heavens above us!
Would ye on this earth but give us
Steadfast minds and dauntless courage,
We, oh, kindly ones, would leave you
All your spacious heavens above us!

EXPLANATION OF AN ANCIENT WOODCUT, REPRESENTING HANS SACHS'S POETICAL MISSION.

[I feel considerable hesitation in venturing to offer this version of a poem which Carlyle describes to be "a beautiful piece (a very *Hans Sachs beatified*, both in character and style), which we wish there was any possibility of translating." The reader will be aware that Hans Sachs was the celebrated minstrel-cobbler of Nuremberg, who wrote 208 plays, 1,700 comic tales, and between 4,000 and 5,000 lyric poems. He flourished throughout almost the whole of the sixteenth century.]

Early within his workshop here,
On Sundays stands our master dear;
His dirty apron he puts away,
And wears a cleanly doublet to-day;

Lets waxed thread, hammer, and pincers rest,
And lays his awl within his chest;
The seventh day he takes repose
From many pulls and many blows.

Soon as the spring-sun meets his view,
Repose begets him labour anew;
He feels that he holds within his brain
A little world that broods there amain,
And that begins to act and to live,
Which he unto others would gladly give.

He had a skilful eye and true,
And was full kind and loving, too.
For contemplation, clear and pure, —
For making all his own again, sure;
He had a tongue that charmed when 'twas heard,
And graceful and light flowed every word;
Which made the Muses in him rejoice,
The Master-singer of their choice.

And now a maiden entered there,
With swelling breast, and body fair;
With footing firm she took her place,
And moved with stately, noble grace;

She did not walk in wanton mood,
Nor look around with glances lewd.
She held a measure in her hand,
Her girdle was a golden band,
A wreath of corn was on her head,
Her eye the day's bright lustre shed;
Her name is honest Industry,
Else, Justice, Magnanimity.

She entered with a kindly greeting;
He felt no wonder at the meeting,

For, kind and fair as she might be,
He long had known her, fancied he.

"I have selected thee," she said,
"From all who earth's wild mazes tread,
That thou shouldst have clear-sighted sense,
And nought that's wrong should e'er commence.
When others run in strange confusion,
Thy gaze shall see through each illusion;
When others dolefully complain,
Thy cause with jesting thou shalt gain,
Honour and right shall value duly,
In everything act simply, truly, —
Virtue and godliness proclaim,
And call all evil by its name,
Nought soften down, attempt no quibble,
Nought polish up, nought vainly scribble.
The world shall stand before thee, then,
As seen by Albert Durer's ken,
In manliness and changeless life,
In inward strength and firmness rife.
Fair Nature's Genius by the hand
Shall lead thee on through every land,
Teach thee each different life to scan,
Show thee the wondrous ways of man,
His shifts, confusions, thrustings, drubbings,
Pushings, tearings, pressings, and rubbings;
The varying madness of the crew,
The ant-hill's ravings bring to view;
But thou shalt see all this expressed,
As though 'twere in a magic chest.
Write these things down for folks on earth,
In hopes they may to wit give birth." —
Then she a window opened wide,
And showed a motley crowd outside,
All kinds of beings 'neath the sky,
As in his writings one may spy.

Our master dear was after this,
On nature thinking, full of bliss,
When toward him, from the other side
He saw an agèd woman glide;
The name she bears, Historia,
Mythologia, Fabula;
With footstep tottering and unstable
She dragged a large and wooden carved table,
Where, with wide sleeves and human mien,
The Lord was catechising seen;
Adam, Eve, Eden, the Serpent's seduction,
Gomorrah and Sodom's awful destruction,
The twelve illustrious women, too,
That mirror of honour brought to view;
All kinds of bloodthirstiness, murder, and sin,
The twelve wicked tyrants also were in,
And all kinds of goodly doctrine and law;
Saint Peter with his scourge you saw,
With the world's ways dissatisfied,
And by our Lord with power supplied.
Her train and dress, behind and before,
And e'en the seams, were painted o'er
With tales of worldly virtue and crime, —
Our master viewed all this for a time;
The sight right gladly he surveyed,
So useful for him in his trade,
Whence he was able to procure
Example good and precept sure,
Recounting all with truthful care,
As though he had been present there.
His spirit seemed from earth to fly,
He ne'er had turned away his eye,
Did he not just behind him hear
A rattle of bells approaching near.

And now a fool doth catch his eye,
With goat and ape's leap drawing nigh,

A merry interlude preparing
With fooleries and jests unsparing.
Behind him, in a line drawn out,
He dragged all fools, the lean and stout,
The great and little, the empty and full,
All too witty, and all too dull,
A lash he flourished overhead,
As though a dance of apes he led,
Abusing them with bitterness,
As though his wrath would ne'er grow less.

While on this sight our master gazed,
His head was growing well-nigh crazed:
What words for all could he e'er find,
Could such a medley be combined?
Could he continue with delight
For evermore to sing and write?
When lo! from out a cloud's dark bed
In at the upper window sped
The Muse, in all her majesty,
As fair as our loved maids we see.
With clearness she around him threw
Her truth, that ever stronger grew.

"I, to ordain thee come," she spake:
"So prosper, and my blessing take!
The holy fire that slumbering lies
Within thee, in bright flames shall rise;
Yet that thine ever-restless life
May still with kindly strength be rife,
I, for thine inward spirit's calm,
Have granted nourishment and balm,
That rapture may thy soul imbue,
Like some fair blossom bathed in dew." —

Behind his house then secretly
Outside the doorway pointed she,

Where in a shady garden-nook
A beauteous maid with downcast look
Was sitting where a stream was flowing,
With elder bushes near it growing;
She sat beneath an apple-tree,
And nought around her seemed to see.
Her lap was full of roses fair,
Which in a wreath she twined with care,
And with them leaves and blossoms blended:
For whom was that sweet wreath intended?
Thus sat she, modest and retired,
Her bosom throbbed, with hope inspired;
Such deep forebodings filled her mind,
No room for wishing could she find,
And with the thoughts that o'er it flew,
Perchance a sigh was mingled, too.

"But why should sorrow cloud thy brow?
That, dearest love, which fills thee now
Is fraught with joy and ecstasy,
Prepared in one alone for thee,
That he within thine eye may find
Solace when fortune proves unkind,
And be new-born through many a kiss,
That he receives with inward bliss:
Whene'er he clasps thee to his breast,
May he from all his toils find rest.
When he in thy dear arms shall sink,
May he new life and vigour drink:
Fresh joys of youth shalt thou obtain,
In merry jest rejoice again.
With raillery and roguish spite,
Thou now shalt tease him, now delight.
Thus Love will never more grow old.
Thus will the minstrel ne'er be cold."

While he thus lives, in secret blessed,
Above him in the clouds doth rest

An oak-wreath, verdant and sublime,
Placed on his brow in after-time;
While they are banished to the slough,
Who their great master disavow.

THE FRIENDLY MEETING.

In spreading mantle to my chin concealed,
I trod the rocky path so steep and gray,
Then to the wintry plain I bent my way
Uneasily, to flight my bosom steeled.

But sudden was the new-born day revealed.
A maiden came, in heavenly bright array,
Like the fair creatures of the poet's lay
In realms of song. My yearning heart was healed!

Yet turned I thence, till she had onward passed,
While closer still the folds to draw I tried,
As though with heat self-kindled to grow warm;
But followed her. She stood. The die was cast!
No more within my mantle could I hide;
I threw it off, — she lay within mine arm.

IN A WORD.

Thus to be chained for ever, can I bear?
A very torment that, in truth, would be.
This very day my new resolve shall see, —
I'll not go near the lately worshipped Fair.

Yet what excuse, my heart, can I prepare
In such a case, for not consulting thee?
But courage! while our sorrows utter we
In tones where love, grief, gladness have a share.

But see! the minstrel's bidding to obey,
Its melody pours forth the sounding lyre,
Yearning a sacrifice of love to bring.
Scarce would'st thou think it — ready is the lay;
Well, but what then? Methought in the first fire
We to her presence flew, that lay to sing.

THE MAIDEN SPEAKS.

How grave thou lookest, loved one! wherefore so?
Thy marble image seems a type of thee;
Like it, no sign of life thou givest me;
Compared with thee, the stone appears to glow.

Behind his shield in ambush lurks the foe,
The friend's brow all unruffled we should see.
I seek thee, but thou seekest away to flee;
Fixed as this sculptured figure, learn to grow!

Tell me, to which should I the preference pay?
Must I from both with coldness meet alone?
The one is lifeless, thou with life art blest.
In short, no longer to throw words away,
I'll fondly kiss and kiss and kiss this stone,
Till thou dost tear me hence with envious breast.

GROWTH.

O'ER field and plain, in childhood's artless days,
Thou sprangest with me on many a spring-morn fair.
"For such a daughter, with what pleasing care,
Would I, as father, happy dwellings raise?"

And when thou on the world didst cast thy gaze,
Thy joy was then in household toils to share.
"Why did I trust her, why she trust me e'er?
For such a sister, how I Heaven should praise!"

Nothing can now the beauteous growth retard;
Love's glowing flame within my breast is fanned.
Shall I embrace her form, my grief to end?
Thee as a queen must I, alas, regard:
So high above me placed thou seemest to stand;
Before a passing look I meekly bend.

FOOD IN TRAVEL.

IF to her eyes' bright lustre I were blind,
No longer would they serve my life to gild.
The will of destiny must be fulfilled, —
This knowing, I withdrew with saddened mind,

No further happiness I now could find;
The former longings of my heart were stilled,
I sought her looks alone, whereon to build
My joy in life — all else was left behind.

Wine's genial glow, the festal banquet gay,
Ease, sleep, and friends, all wonted pleasures glad
I spurned, till little there remained to prove.

Now calmly through the world I wend my way:
That which I crave may everywhere be had,
With me I bring the one thing needful — love.

DEPARTURE.

With many a thousand kiss not yet content,
At length with one kiss I was forced to go;
After that bitter parting's depth of woe,
I deemed the shore from which my steps I bent,

Its hills, streams, dwellings, mountains, as I went,
A pledge of joy, till daylight ceased to glow;
Then on my sight did blissful visions glow;
In the dim-lighted, distant firmament.

And when at length the sea confined my gaze,
My ardent longing filled my heart once more;
What I had lost unwillingly I sought.
Then Heaven appeared to shed its kindly rays;
Methought that all I had possessed of yore
Remained still mine — that I was reft of nought.

THE LOVING ONE WRITES.

The look that thy sweet eyes on mine impress,
The pledge thy lips to mine convey, — the kiss, —
He who, like me, hath knowledge sure of this,
Can he in aught beside find happiness?

Removed from thee, friend-severed, in distress,
These thoughts I vainly struggle to dismiss
They still return to that one hour of bliss,
The only one; then tears my grief confess.

But unawares the tear makes haste to dry:
He loves, methinks, e'en to those glades so still, —
And shalt not thou to distant lands extend?
Receive the murmurs of this loving sigh;
My only joy on earth is in thy will,
Thy kindly will tow'rd me; a token send!

Lovingly I'll sing of love;
Ever comes she from above.

THE LOVING ONE ONCE MORE.

Why do I o'er my paper once more bend?
Ask not too closely, dearest one, I pray:
For, to speak truth, I've nothing now to say;
Yet to thy hands at length 'twill come, dear friend.

Since I can come not with it, what I send
My undivided heart shall now convey,
With all its joys, hopes, pleasures, pains, to-day:
All this hath no beginning, hath no end.

Henceforward I may ne'er to thee confide
How, far as thought, wish, fancy, will, can reach,
My faithful heart with thine is surely blended.
Thus stood I once enraptured by thy side,
Gazed on thee, and said nought. What need of speech?
My very being itself was ended.

THE DOUBTERS AND THE LOVERS.

THE DOUBTERS.

Ye love, and sonnets write! Fate's strange behest!
The heart, its hidden meaning to declare,
Must seek for rhymes, uniting pair with pair:
Learn, children, that the will is weak, at best.

Scarcely with freedom the o'erflowing breast
As yet can speak, and well may it beware;
Tempestuous passions sweep each chord that's there,
Then once more sink to night and gentle rest.

Why vex yourselves and us, the heavy stone
Up the steep path but step by step to roll?
It falls again, and ye ne'er cease to strive.

THE LOVERS.

But we are on the proper road alone!
If gladly is to thaw the frozen soul,
The fire of love must aye be kept alive.

SHE CANNOT END.

When unto thee I sent the page all white,
Instead of first thereon inscribing aught,
The space thou doubtless filledst up in sport,
And sent it me to make my joy grow bright.

As soon as the blue cover met my sight,
As well becomes a woman, quick as thought
I tore it open, leaving hidden nought,
And read the well-known words of pure delight:

My only being! Dearest heart! Sweet child!
How kindly thou my yearning then didst still
With gentle words, enthralling me to thee.
In truth methought I read thy whispers mild
Wherewith thou lovingly my soul didst fill,
E'en to myself for aye ennobling me.

NEMESIS.

When through the nations stalks contagion wild,
We from them cautiously should steal away,
E'en I have oft with ling'ring and delay
Shunned many an influence, not to be defiled.

And e'en though Amor oft my hours beguiled,
At length with him preferred I not to play,
And so, too, with the wretched sons of clay,
When four and three-lined verses they compiled.

But punishment pursues the scoffer straight,
As if by serpent-torch of furies led
From hill to vale, from land to sea to fly.
I hear the genie's laughter at my fate;
Yet do I find all power of thinking fled
In sonnet-rage and love's fierce ecstasy.

THE CHRISTMAS-BOX.

This box, mine own sweet darling, thou wilt find
With many a varied sweetmeat's form supplied;
The fruits are they of holy Christmas-tide,
But baked, indeed, for children's use designed.

I'd fain, in speeches sweet with skill combined,
Poetic sweetmeats for the feast provide;
But why in such frivolities confide?
Perish the thought, with flattery to blind!

One sweet thing there is still, that from within,
Within us speaks, — that may be felt afar;
This may be wafted o'er to thee alone.
If thou a recollection fond canst win,
As if with pleasure gleamed each well-known star,
The smallest gift thou never wilt disown.

THE WARNING.

When sounds the trumpet at the Judgment Day,
And when for ever all things earthly die,
We must a full and true account supply
Of ev'ry useless word we dropped in play.

But what effect will all the words convey
Wherein with eager zeal and lovingly,
That I might win thy favour, laboured I,
If on thine ear alone they die away?

Therefore, sweet love, thy conscience bear in mind,
Remember well how long thou hast delayed,
So that the world such sufferings may not know.
If I must reckon, and excuses find
For all things useless I to thee have said,
To a full year the Judgment Day will grow.

THE EPOCHS.

On Petrarch's heart, all other days before,
In flaming letters written, was impressed
Good Friday. And on mine, be it confessed,
Is this year's Advent, as it passeth o'er.

I do not now begin, — I *still* adore
Her whom I early cherished in my breast,
Then once again with prudence dispossessed,
And to whose heart I'm driven back once more.

The love of Petrarch, that all-glorious love,
Was unrequited, and, alas, full sad;
One long Good Friday 'twas, one heartache drear;
But may my mistress' Advent ever prove,
With its palm-jubilee, so sweet and glad,
One endless May-day, through the livelong year!

CHARADE.

Two words there are, both short, of beauty rare,
Whose sounds our lips so often love to frame,
But which with clearness never can proclaim
The things whose own peculiar stamp they bear.

'Tis well in days of age and youth so fair,
One on the other boldly to inflame;
And if those words together linked we name,
A blissful rapture we discover there.

But now to give them pleasure do I seek,
And in myself my happiness would find;
I hope in silence, but I hope for this:
Gently, as loved ones' names, those words to speak,
To see them both within one image shrined,
Both in one being to embrace with bliss.

THE SOLDIER'S CONSOLATION.

No! in truth there's here no lack:
White the bread, the maidens black!
To another town, next night,
Black the bread, the maidens white!

TO ORIGINALS.

A FELLOW says: "I own no school or college;
No master lives whom I acknowledge;
And pray don't entertain the thought
That from the dead I e'er learnt aught."
This, if I rightly understand,
Means: "I'm a blockhead at first hand."

GENIAL IMPULSE.

THUS roll I, never taking ease,
My tub, like Saint Diogenes,
Now serious am, now seek to please,
Now love and hate in turns one sees;
The motives now are those, now these;
Now nothings, now realities.
Thus roll I, never taking ease,
My tub, like Saint Diogenes.

NEITHER THIS NOR THAT.

IF thou to be a slave shouldst will,
Thou'lt get no pity, but fare ill;
And if a master thou wouldst be,
The world will view it angrily;
And if in *statu quo* thou stay,
That thou art but a fool they'll say.

THE WAY TO BEHAVE.

THOUGH tempers are bad, and peevish folks swear,
Remember to ruffle thy brows, friend, ne'er;
And let not the fancies of women so fair
E'er serve thy pleasure in life to impair.

THE BEST.

When head and heart are busy, say,
What better can be found?
Who neither loves nor goes astray,
Were better under ground.

AS BROAD AS IT'S LONG.

Modest men must needs endure,
And the bold must humbly bow;
Thus thy fate's the same, be sure,
Whether bold or modest thou.

THE RULE OF LIFE.

If thou wouldst live unruffled by care,
Let not the past torment thee e'er;
As little as possible be thou annoyed,
And let the present be ever enjoyed;
Ne'er let thy breast with hate be supplied,
And to God the future confide.

THE SAME, EXPANDED.

If thou wouldst live unruffled by care,
Let not the past torment thee e'er;
If any loss thou hast to rue,
Act as though thou wert born anew;
Inquire the meaning of each day,
What each day means, itself will say;
In thine own actions take thy pleasure,
What others do thou'lt duly treasure;
Ne'er let thy breast with hate be supplied,
And to God the future confide.

CALM AT SEA.

Silence deep rules o'er the waters,
Calmly slumbering lies the main,
While the sailor views with trouble
Nought but one vast level plain.

Not a zephyr is in motion!
Silence fearful as the grave!
In the mighty waste of ocean
Sunk to rest is every wave.

If wealth is gone, — then something is gone!
Quick, make up thy mind,
And fresh wealth find.
If honour is gone, — then much is gone!
Seek glory to find,
And people then will alter their mind.
If courage is gone, — then all is gone!
'Twere better that thou hadst never been born.

THE PROSPEROUS VOYAGE.

The mist is fast clearing,
And radiant is heaven,
Whilst Æolus loosens
Our anguish-fraught bond.
The zephyrs are sighing,
Alert is the sailor.
Quick! nimbly be plying!
The billows are riven,
The distance approaches;
I see land beyond!

COURAGE.

Carelessly over the plain away,
Where by the boldest man no path
Cut before thee thou canst discern,
Make for thyself a path!

Silence, loved one, my heart!
Cracking, let it not break!
Breaking, break not with thee!

ADMONITION.

Wherefore ever ramble on
For the Good is lying near.
Fortune learn to seize alone,
For that Fortune's ever here.

MY ONLY PROPERTY.

I feel that I'm possessed of nought,
Saving the free unfettered thought
Which from my bosom seeks to flow,
And each propitious passing hour
That suffers me in all its power
A loving fate with truth to know.

May each honest effort be
Crowned with lasting constancy.

OLD AGE.

Old age is courteous — no one more:
For time after time he knocks at the door,
But nobody says, "Walk in, sir, pray!"
Yet turns he not from the door away,
But lifts the latch and enters with speed,
And then they cry, "A cool one, indeed!"

EPITAPH.

As a boy, reserved and naughty;
As a youth, a coxcomb and haughty;
As a man, for action inclined;
As a graybeard, fickle in mind.
Upon thy grave will people read:
This was a very man, indeed!

RULE FOR MONARCHS.

If men are never their thoughts to employ,
Take care to provide them a life full of joy;
But if to some profit and use thou wouldst bend them,
Take care to shear them, and then defend them.

PAULO POST FUTURI.

Weep ye not, ye children dear,
That as yet ye are unborn:
For each sorrow and each tear
Makes the father's heart to mourn.

Patient be a short time to it,
Unproduced, and known to none;
If your father cannot do it,
By your mother 'twill be done.

He who with life makes sport,
Can prosper never;
Who rules himself in nought,
Is a slave ever.

THE FOOL'S EPILOGUE.

Many good works I've done and ended,
Ye take the praise — I'm not offended;
For in the world, I've always thought
Each thing its true position hath sought.
When praised for foolish deeds am I,
I set off laughing heartily;
When blamed for doing something good,
I take it in an easy mood.
If some one stronger gives me hard blows,
That it's a jest, I feign to suppose;
But if 'tis one that's but my own like,
I know the way such folks to strike.
When Fortune smiles, I merry grow,
And sing *in dulci jubilo;*
When sinks her wheel, and tumbles me o'er,
I think 'tis sure to rise once more.

In the sunshine of summer I ne'er lament,
Because the winter it cannot prevent;
And when the white snowflakes fall around,
I don my skates, and am off with a bound.
Though I dissemble as I will,
The sun for me will ne'er stand still;

The old and wonted course is run,
Until the whole of life is done;
Each day the servant like the lord,
In turns comes home, and goes abroad;
If proud or humble the line they take,
They all must eat, drink, sleep, and wake.
So nothing ever vexes me;
Act like the fool, and wise ye'll be!

AUTHORS.

Over the meadows, and down the stream,
And through the garden-walks straying,
He plucks the flowers that fairest seem;
His throbbing heart brooks no delaying.
His maiden then comes — oh, what ecstasy!
Thy flowers thou givest for one glance of her eye!

The gard'ner next door o'er the hedge sees the youth:
"I'm not such a fool as that, in good truth;
My pleasure is ever to cherish each flower,
And see that no birds my fruit e'er devour.
But when 'tis ripe, your money, good neighbour!
'Twas not for nothing I took all this labour!"

And such, methinks, are the author-tribe.
The one his pleasures around him strews,
That his friends, the public, may reap, if they choose;
The other would fain make them all subscribe.

CAT-PIE.

While *he* is marked by vision clear
Who fathoms Nature's treasures,
The man may follow void of fear,
Who her proportions measures.

Though for one mortal, it is true,
These trades may both be fitted,
Yet, that the things themselves are *two*
Must always be admitted.

Once on a time there lived a cook
Whose skill was past disputing,
Who in his head a fancy took
To try his luck at shooting.

So, gun in hand, he sought a spot
Where stores of game were breeding,
And there ere long a cat he shot
That on young birds was feeding.

This cat he fancied was a hare,
Forming a judgment hasty,
So served it up for people's fare
Well spiced and in a pasty.

Yet many a guest with wrath was filled
(All who had noses tender):
The cat that's by the sportsman killed
No cook a hare can render.

JOY.

A DRAGON-FLY with beauteous wing
Is hovering o'er a silvery spring;
I watch its motions with delight,—
Now dark its colours seem, now bright,
Chameleon-like appears now blue,
Now red, and now of greenish hue.
Would it would come still nearer me,
That I its tints might better see!

It hovers, flutters, resting ne'er!
But hush! it settles on the mead.
I have it safe now, I declare!
And when its form I closely view,
'Tis of a sad and dingy blue —
Such, Joy-Dissector, is thy case, indeed!

EXPLANATION OF AN ANTIQUE GEM.

A YOUNG fig-tree its form lifts high
Within a beauteous garden;
And see, a goat is sitting by,
As if he were its warden.

But, oh, Quirites, how one errs!
The tree is guarded badly;
For round the other side there whirrs
And hums a beetle madly.

The hero with his well-mailed coat
Nibbles the branches tall so;
A mighty longing feels the goat
Gently to climb up also.

And so, my friends, ere long ye see
The tree all leafless standing;
It looks a type of misery,
Help of the gods demanding.

Then listen, ye ingenuous youth,
Who hold wise saws respected:
From he-goat and from beetle's tooth
A tree should be protected!

LEGEND.

THERE lived in the desert a holy man
To whom a goat-footed Faun one day
Paid a visit, and thus began
To his surprise: "I entreat thee to pray
That grace to me and my friends may be given,
That we may be able to mount to Heaven,
For great is our thirst for heavenly bliss."
The holy man made answer to this:
"Much danger is lurking in thy petition,
Nor will it be easy to gain admission;
Thou dost not come with an angel's salute;
For I see thou wearest a cloven foot."
The wild man paused, and then answered he:
"What doth my goat's foot matter to thee?
Full many I've known into heaven to pass
Straight and with ease, with the head of an ass!"

THE WRANGLER.

ONE day a shameless and impudent wight
Went into a shop full of steel wares bright,
Arranged with art upon every shelf.
He fancied they all were meant for himself;
And so, while the patient owner stood by,
The shining goods needs must handle and try,
And valued, — for how should a fool better know? —
The bad things high, and the good ones low,
And all with an easy self-satisfied face;
Then, having bought nothing, he left the place.

The tradesman now felt sorely vexed,
So when the fellow went there next,

A lock of steel made quite red hot.
The other cried upon the spot:
"Such wares as these, who'd ever buy?
The steel is tarnished shamefully," —
Then pulled it, like a fool, about,
But soon set up a piteous shout.
"Pray what's the matter?" the shopman spoke;
The other replied: "Faith, a very cool joke!"

THE CRITIC.

I HAD a fellow as my guest,
Not knowing he was such a pest,
And gave him just my usual fare;
He ate his fill of what was there,
And for a dessert my best things swallowed,
Soon as his meal was o'er, what followed?
Led by the Deuce, to a neighbour he went,
And talked of my food to his heart's content:
"The soup might surely have had more spice,
The meat was ill-browned, and the wine wasn't nice."
A thousand curses alight on his head!
'Tis a critic, I vow! Let the dog be struck dead!

THE YELPERS.

OUR rides in all directions bend,
For business or for pleasure,
Yet yelpings on our steps attend,
And barkings without measure.
The dog that in our stable dwells,
After our heels is striding,
And all the while his noisy yells
But show that we are riding.

THE STORK'S VOCATION.

THE stork who worms and frogs devours
That in our ponds reside,
Why should he dwell on high church towers,
With which he's not allied?

Incessantly he chatters there,
And gives our ears no rest;
But neither old nor young can dare
To drive him from his nest.

I humbly ask it, — how can he
Give of his title proof,
Save by his happy tendency
To sell the church's roof?

THE DILETTANTE AND THE CRITIC.

A BOY a pigeon once possessed,
In gay and brilliant plumage dressed;
He loved it well, and in boyish sport
Its food to take from his mouth he taught,
And in his pigeon he took such pride,
That his joy to others he needs must confide.

An agèd fox near the place chanced to dwell,
Talkative, clever, and learned as well;
The boy his society used to prize,
Hearing with pleasure his wonders and lies.

"My friend, the fox, my pigeon must see!"
He ran, and stretched 'mongst the bushes lay he.
"Look, fox, at my pigeon, my pigeon so fair!
His equal I'm sure thou hast looked upon ne'er!"

"Let's see!" — The boy gave it. — "'Tis really not bad;
And yet, it is far from complete, I must add.
The feathers, for instance, how short! 'Tis absurd!"
So he set to work straightway to pluck the poor bird.

The boy screamed. — "Thou must now stronger pinions supply,
Or else 'twill be ugly, unable to fly."
Soon 'twas stripped — oh, the villain! — and torn all to pieces.
The boy was heartbroken, — and so my tale ceases.

. . . . . .

He who sees in the boy shadowed forth his own case,
Should be on his guard 'gainst the fox's whole race.

POETRY.

God to his untaught children sent
Law, order, knowledge, art, from high,
And every heavenly favour lent,
The world's hard lot to qualify.
They knew not how they should behave,
For all from Heaven stark-naked came;
But Poetry their garments gave,
And then not one had cause for shame.

CELEBRITY.

[A satire on his own "Sorrows of Werther."]

On bridges small and bridges great
Stand Nepomucks in every state,
Of bronze, wood, painted, or of stone,
Some small as dolls, some giants grown;

Each passer must worship before Nepomuck,
Who to die on a bridge chanced to have the ill-luck.
When once a man with head and ears
A saint in people's eyes appears,
Or has been sentenced piteously
Beneath the hangman's hand to die,
He's as a noted person prized,
In portrait is immortalised.
Engravings, woodcuts, are supplied,
And through the world spread far and wide.
Upon them all is seen his name,
And every one admits his claim;
Even the image of the Lord
Is not with greater zeal adored.
Strange fancy of the human race!
Half sinner frail, half child of grace,
We see Herr Werther of the story
In all the pomp of woodcut glory.
His worth is first made duly known,
By having his sad features shown
At every fair the country round;
In every alehouse, too, they're found.
His stick is pointed by each dunce;
"The ball would reach his brain at once!"
And each says, o'er his beer and bread:
"Thank Heaven, that 'tis not *we* are dead!"

PLAYING AT PRIESTS.

Within a town where parity
According to old form we see,—
That is to say, where Catholic
And Protestant no quarrels pick,
And where, as in his father's day,
Each worships God in his own way,

We Lutheran children used to dwell,
By songs and sermons taught as well.
The Catholic cling-clang in truth
Sounded more pleasing to our youth,
For all that we encountered there
To us seemed varied, joyous, fair.
As children, monkeys, and mankind
To ape each other are inclined,
We soon, the time to while away,
A game at priests resolved to play.
Their aprons all our sisters lent
For copes, which gave us great content;
And handkerchiefs embroidered o'er,
Instead of stoles we also wore;
Gold paper, whereon beasts were traced,
The bishop's brow as mitre graced.

Through house and garden thus in state
We strutted early, strutted late;
Repeating, with all proper unction,
Incessantly each holy function,
The best was wanting to the game;
  We knew that a sonorous ring
  Was here a most important thing;
But fortune to our rescue came,
For on the ground a halter lay;
  We were delighted, and at once
  Made it a bell-rope for the nonce,
And kept it moving all the day;
  In turns each sister and each brother
  Acted as sexton to another;
All helped to swell the joyous throng;
  The whole proceeded swimmingly,
  And since no actual bell had we,
We all in chorus sang, Ding dong!

. . . . . .

Our guileless child's-sport long was hushed
In memory's tomb, like some old lay;
And yet across my mind it rushed
With pristine force the other day.
The New-Poetic Catholics
In every point its aptness fix!

SONGS.

Songs are like painted window-panes!
In darkness wrapped the church remains,
If from the market-place we view it;
Thus sees the ignoramus through it.
No wonder that he deems it tame, —
And all his life 'twill be the same.

But let us now inside repair,
And greet the holy chapel there!
At once the whole seems clear and bright,
Each ornament is bathed in light,
And fraught with meaning to the sight.
God's children! thus your fortune prize,
Be edified, and feast your eyes!

A PARABLE.

I picked a rustic nosegay lately,
And bore it homewards, musing greatly;
When, heated by my hand, I found
The heads all drooping toward the ground.
I placed them in a well-cooled glass,
And what a wonder came to pass!
The heads soon raised themselves once more,
The stalks were blooming as before,

And all were in as good a case
As when they left their native place.

. . . . . .

So felt I, when I wondering heard
My song to foreign tongues transferred.

SHOULD E'ER THE LOVELESS DAY.

Should e'er the loveless day remain
Obscured by storms of hail and rain,
  Thy charms thou showest never;
I tap at window, tap at door:
Come, loved one, come! appear once more!
  Thou art as fair as ever!

A PLAN THE MUSES ENTERTAINED.

A plan the Muses entertained
  Methodically to impart
  To Psyche the poetic art;
Prosaic-pure her soul remained,
No wondrous sounds escaped her lyre
  E'en in the fairest summer night;
But Amor came with glance of fire, —
  The lesson soon was learned aright.

THE DEATH OF THE FLY.

With eagerness he drinks the treacherous potion,
  Nor stops to rest, by the first taste misled;
Sweet is the draught, but soon all power of motion
  He finds has from his tender members fled;

No longer has he strength to plume his wing,
No longer strength to raise his head, poor thing!
E'en in enjoyment's hour his life he loses,
His little foot to bear his weight refuses;
So on he sips, and ere his draught is o'er,
Death veils his thousand eyes for evermore.

BY THE RIVER.

When by the broad stream thou dost dwell,
  Oft shallow is its sluggish flood;
Then, when thy fields thou tendest well,
  It o'er them spreads its slime and mud.

The ships descend ere daylight wanes,
  The prudent fisher upward goes;
Round reef and rock ice casts its chains,
  And boys at will the pathway close.

To this attend, then carefully,
  And what thou would, that execute!
Ne'er linger, ne'er o'erhasty be,
  For time moves on with measured foot.

Each road to the proper end
  Runs straight on, without a bend.

THE FOX AND THE HUNTSMAN.

Hard 'tis on a fox's traces
  To arrive, midst forest-glades;
Hopeless utterly the chase is,
  If his flight the huntsman aids.

And so 'tis with many a wonder
(Why A B make *Ab* in fact),
Over which we gape and blunder,
And our head and brains distract.

THE FROGS.

A POOL was once congealed with frost;
The frogs in its deep waters lost,
No longer dared to croak or spring;
But promised, being half asleep,
If suffered to the air to creep,
As very nightingales to sing.

A thaw dissolved the ice so strong, —
They proudly steered themselves along,
When landed, squatted on the shore,
And croaked as loudly as before.

THE WEDDING.

A FEAST was in a village spread, —
It was a wedding-day they said.
The parlour of the inn I found,
And saw the couples whirling round,
Each lass attended by her lad,
And all seemed loving, blithe, and glad;
But on my asking for the bride,
A fellow with a stare replied:
"'Tis not the place that point to raise!
We're only dancing in her honour;
We now have danced three nights and days,
And not bestowed one thought upon her."

. . . . . .

Whoe'er in life employs his eyes
Such cases oft will recognise.

THE FOX AND CRANE.

Once two persons uninvited
Came to join my dinner table;
For the nonce they lived united,
Fox and crane yclept in fable.

Civil greetings passed between us;
Then I plucked some pigeons tender
For the fox of Jackal-genus,
Adding grapes in full-grown splendour.

Long-necked flasks I put as dishes
For the crane without delaying,
Filled with gold and silver fishes,
In the limpid water playing.

Had ye witnessed Reynard planted
At his flat plate all demurely,
Ye with envy must have granted:
"Ne'er was such a gourmand, surely!"

While the bird, with circumspection,
On one foot as usual cradled,
From the flask his fish-refection
With his bill and long neck ladled.

One the pigeons praised, — the other,
As they went, extolled the fishes,
Each one scoffing at his brother
For preferring vulgar dishes.

. . . . . .

If thou wouldst preserve thy credit,
When thou askest folks to guzzle
At thy board, take care to spread it
Suited both for bill and muzzle.

BURIAL.

To the grave one day from a house they bore
A maiden;
To the window the citizens went to explore;
In splendour they lived, and with wealth as of yore
Their banquets were laden.
Then thought they: "The maid to the tomb is now borne;
We too from our dwellings ere long must be torn,
And he that is left our departure to mourn,
To our riches will be the successor,
For some one must be their possessor."

THE BUYERS.

To an apple-woman's stall
Once some children nimbly ran;
Longing much to purchase all,
They with joyous haste began
Snatching up the piles there raised,
While with eager eyes they gazed
On the rosy fruit so nice;
But when they found out the price,
Down they threw the whole they'd got,
Just as if they were red hot.

. . . . . .

The man who gratis will his goods supply
Will never find a lack of folks to buy!

SYMBOLS.

Palm Sunday at the Vatican
They celebrate with palms;
With reverence bows each holy man,
And chants the ancient psalms.
Those very psalms are also sung
With olive boughs in hand,
While holly, mountain wilds among,
In place of palms must stand;
In fine, one seeks some twig that's green,
And takes a willow rod,
So that the pious man may e'en
In small things praise his God.
And if ye have observed it well,
To gain what's fit ye're able,
If ye in faith can but excel;
Such are the myths of fable.

THREATENING SIGNS.

If Venus in the evening sky
Is seen in radiant majesty,
If rod-like comets, red as blood,
Are 'mongst the constellations viewed,
Out springs the Ignoramus, yelling:
"The star's exactly o'er my dwelling!
What woeful prospect, ah, for me!"
Then calls his neighbour mournfully:
"Behold that awful sign of evil,
Portending woe to me, poor devil!
My mother's asthma ne'er will leave her,
My child is sick with wind and fever;
I dread the illness of my wife,
A week has passed, devoid of strife, —

And other things have reached my ear;
The Judgment Day has come, I fear!"

His neighbour answers: "Friend, you're right!
Matters look very bad to-night.
Let's go a street or two, though, hence,
And gaze upon the stars from thence." —
No change appears in either case.
Let each remain then in his place,
And wisely do the best he can,
Patient as any other man.

THE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.

"The mountain village was destroyed;
But see how soon is filled the void!
Shingles and boards, as by magic arise,
The babe in his cradle and swaddling-clothes lies;
How blest to trust to God's protection!"
Behold a wooden new erection,
So that, if sparks and wind but choose,
God's self at such a game must lose!

In the world do things go with you ill,
You can't do right, do what you will.

THREE PALINODIAS.

I.

"Incense is but a tribute for the gods, —
To mortals 'tis but poison."

The smoke that from thine altar blows,
Can it the gods offend?
For I observe thou hold'st thy nose —
Pray what does this portend?

Mankind deem incense to excel
Each other earthly thing,
So he that cannot bear its smell,
No incense e'er should bring.

With unmoved face by thee at least
To dolls is homage given;
If not obstructed by the priest,
The scent mounts up to heaven.

II.

CONFLICT OF WIT AND BEAUTY.

Sir Wit, who is so much esteemed,
And who is worthy of all honour,
Saw Beauty his superior deemed
By folks who loved to gaze upon her;
At this he was most sorely vexed.
Then came Sir Breath (long known as fit
To represent the cause of wit),
Beginning, rudely, I admit,
To treat the lady with a text.
To this she hearkened not at all,
But hastened to his principal:
"None are so wise, they say, as you,—
Is not the world enough for two?
If you are obstinate, good-bye!
If wise, to love me you will try,
For be assured the world can ne'er
Give birth to a more handsome pair."

Ἄλλως.

Fair daughters were by beauty reared,
Wit had but dull sons for his lot;
So for a season it appeared
Beauty was constant, Wit was not.

But Wit's a native of the soil,
So he returned, worked, strove amain,
And found — sweet guerdon for his toil! —
Beauty to quicken him again.

III.

RAIN AND RAINBOW.

During a heavy storm it chanced
That from his room a cockney glanced
At the fierce tempest as it broke,
While to his neighbour thus he spoke:
"The thunder has our awe inspired,
Our barns by lightning have been fired, —
Our sins to punish, I suppose;
But, in return, to soothe our woes,
See how the rain in torrents fell,
Making the harvest promise well!
But is't a rainbow that I spy
Extending o'er the dark-gray sky?
With it I'm sure we may dispense,
The coloured cheat! The vain pretence!"
Dame Iris straightway thus replied:
"Dost dare my beauty to deride?
In realms of space God stationed me
A type of better worlds to be
To eyes that from life's sorrows rove
In cheerful hope to Heaven above,
And through the mists that hover here
God and His precepts blest revere.
Do thou, then, grovel like the swine,
And to the ground thy snout confine
But suffer the enlightened eye
To feast upon my majesty."

A SYMBOL.

[This fine poem is given by Goethe amongst a small collection of what he calls *Loge* (Lodge) meaning thereby Masonic pieces.]

THE mason's trade
Resembles life,
With all its strife, —
Is like the stir made
By man on earth's face.

Though weal and woe
The future may hide,
Unterrified
We onward go
In ne'er-changing race.

A veil of dread
Hangs heavier still.
Deep slumbers fill
The stars overhead,
And the foot-trodden grave.

Observe them well,
And watch them revealing
How solemn feeling
And wonderment swell
The hearts of the brave.

The voice of the blest,
And of spirits on high
Seems loudly to cry:
"To do what is best,
Unceasing endeavour!

"In silence eterne
Here chaplets are twined,
That each noble mind
Its guerdon may earn, —
Then hope ye for ever!"

VALEDICTION.

I ONCE was fond of fools,
And bid them come each day;
Then each one brought his tools,
The carpenter to play;
The roof to strip first choosing,
Another to supply,
The wood as trestles using,
To move it by-and-by,
While here and there they ran,
And knocked against each other;
To fret I soon began,
My anger could not smother,
So cried, "Get out, ye fools!"
At this they were offended;
Then each one took his tools,
And so our friendship ended.

Since that I've wiser been,
And sit beside my door;
When one of them is seen,
I cry, "Appear no more!"
"Hence, stupid knave!" I bellow:
At this he's angry, too:
"You impudent old fellow!
And pray, sir, who are you?
Along the streets we riot,
And revel at the fair:

But yet we're pretty quiet,
And folks revile us ne'er.
Don't call us names, then, please!"
At length I meet with ease,
For now they leave my door —
'Tis better than before!

THE COUNTRY SCHOOLMASTER.

I.

A MASTER of a country school
Jumped up one day from off his stool
Inspired with firm resolve to try
To gain the best society;
So to the nearest baths he walked,
And into the saloon he stalked.
He felt quite startled at the door,
Ne'er having seen the like before.
To the first stranger made he now
A very low and graceful bow,
But quite forgot to bear in mind
That people also stood behind;
His left-hand neighbour's paunch he struck
A grievous blow by great ill luck;
Pardon for this he first entreated,
And then in haste his bow repeated.
His right-hand neighbour next he hit,
And begged him, too, to pardon it;
But on his granting his petition,
Another was in like condition;
These compliments he paid to all,
Behind, before, across the hall;
At length one who could stand no more
Showed him impatiently the door.

. . . . . .

May many, pondering on their crimes,
A moral draw from this betimes!

II.

As he proceeded on his way
He thought, "I was too weak to-day;
To bow I'll ne'er again be seen;
For goats will swallow what is green."
Across the fields he now must speed,
Not over stumps and stones, indeed,
But over meads and cornfields sweet,
Trampling down all with clumsy feet.
A farmer met him by-and-by,
And didn't ask him: how? or why?
But with his fist saluted him.

"I feel new life in every limb!"
Our traveller cried in ecstasy.
"Who art thou who thus gladden'st me?
May Heaven such blessings ever send!
Ne'er may I want a jovial friend!"

THE LEGEND OF THE HORSESHOE.

When still unknown, and low as well,
Our Lord upon the earth did dwell,
And many disciples with him went
Who seldom knew what his words meant,
He was extremely fond of holding
His court in the market-place, unfolding
The highest precepts to their hearing,
With holy mouth and heart unfolding;
For man, in Heaven's face when preaching,
Adds freedom's strength unto his teaching!

By parables and by example,
He made each market-place a temple.
He thus in peace of mind one day
To some small town with them did stray,
Saw something glitter in the street,
A broken horseshoe lay at his feet.
He then to Peter turned and said:
"Pick up that iron in my stead."
St. Peter out of humour was,
Having in dreams indulged because
All men on thoughts so like to dwell,
How they the world would govern well;
Here fancy revels without bounds;
On this his dearest thoughts he founds.
This treasure-trove he quite despised,
But crowned sceptre he'd have prized;
And why should he now bend his back
To put old iron in his sack?
He turned aside with outward show
As though he heard none speaking so!

The Lord, to his long-suffering true,
Himself picked up the horse's shoe,
And of it made no further mention,
But to the town walked with intention
Of going to a blacksmith's door,
Who gave one farthing for his store.
And now, when through the market strolling,
Cherries some one he heard extolling.
Of these he bought as few or many
As farthing buys, if it buy any,
Which he, in wonted peacefulness,
Gently within his sleeve did press.

Now out at t'other gate they'd gone
Past fields and meadows, houses none;

The road likewise of trees was bare,
The sun shone bright with ardent glare,
So that great price, in plain thus stretched,
A drink of water would have fetched.
The Lord, walking before them all,
Let unawares a cherry fall.
St. Peter ate it, then and there,
As though a golden apple it were.
He relished much the luscious fruit.
The Lord, whenever time would suit,
Another cherry forward sent,
For which St. Peter swiftly bent.
The Lord thus often and again
After the cherries made him strain.
When this had lasted quite awhile,
The Lord spoke thus with cheerful smile:
"If thou hadst stirred when first I bade thee,
More comfortable 'twould have made thee;
Whoe'er small things too much disdains,
For smaller ones takes greater pains."

THE WANDERER.

[Published in the Göttingen *Musen Almanach*, having been written "to express his feelings and caprices" after his separation from Frederica.]

WANDERER.

YOUNG woman, may God bless thee,
Thee, and the sucking infant
Upon thy breast!
Let me, against this rocky wall,
Neath the elm-tree's shadow,
Lay aside my burden,
Near thee take my rest.

WOMAN.

What vocation leads thee,
While the day is burning,
Up this dusty path?
Bring'st thou goods from out the town
Round the country?
Smilest thou, stranger,
At my question?

WANDERER.

From the town no goods I bring.
Cool is now the evening;
Show to me the fountain
Whence thou drinkest,
Woman young and kind!

WOMAN.

Up the rocky pathway mount;
Go thou first? Across the thicket
Leads the pathway toward the cottage
That I live in,
To me the fountain
Whence I drink.

WANDERER.

Signs of man's arranging hand
See I 'mid the trees!
Not by thee these stones were joined,
Nature, who so freely scattered!

WOMAN.

Up, still up!

WANDERER.

Lo, a mossy architrave is here!
I discern thee, fashioning spirit?
On the stone thou hast impressed thy seal.

WOMAN.

Onward, stranger!

WANDERER.

Over an inscription am I treading!
'Tis effacèd!
Ye are seen no longer,
Words so deeply graven,
Who your master's true devotion
Should have shown to thousand grandsons.

WOMAN.

At these stones why
Start'st thou, stranger?
Many stones are lying yonder
Round my cottage.

WANDERER.

Yonder?

WOMAN.

Through the thicket,
Turning to the left,
Here!

WANDERER.

Ye Muses and ye Graces!

WOMAN.

This, then, is my cottage.

WANDERER.

'Tis a ruined temple![1]

WOMAN.

Just below you it, see,
Springs, the fountain
Whence I drink.

WANDERER.

Thou dost hover
O'er thy grave, all glowing,
Genius! while upon thee
Hath thy masterpiece
Fallen crumbling,
Thou Immortal One!

WOMAN.

Stay, a cup I'll fetch thee
Whence to drink.

WANDERER.

Ivy circles thy slender
Form so graceful and godlike.

[1] Compare with the beautiful description contained in the subsequent lines, an account of a ruined temple of Ceres, given by Chamberlayne in his "Pharonnida" (published in 1659) : —

". . . With mournful majesty
A heap of solitary ruins lie,
Half sepulchred in dust, the bankrupt heir
To prodigal antiquity . . ."

How ye rise on high
From the ruins,
Column-pair!
And thou, their lonely sister yonder, —
How thou,
Dusky moss upon thy sacred head, —
Lookest down in mournful majesty
On thy brethren's figures,
Lying scattered
At thy feet!
In the shadow of the bramble
Earth and rubbish veil them,
Lofty grass is waving o'er them!
Is it thus thou, Nature, prizest
Thy great masterpiece's masterpiece?
Carelessly destroyest thou
Thine own sanctuary,
Sowing thistles there?

WOMAN.

How the infant sleeps!
Wilt thou rest thee in the cottage,
Stranger? Wouldst thou rather
In the open air still linger?
Now 'tis cool! take thou the child,
While I go and draw some water.
Sleep on, darling! sleep!

WANDERER.

Sweet is thy repose!
How, with heaven-born health imbued,
Peacefully he slumbers!
O thou, born among the ruins
Spread by great antiquity,
On thee rest her spirit!
He whom it encircles

Will, in godlike consciousness,
Every day enjoy.
Full of germ, unfold
As the smiling spring-time's
Fairest charm,
Outshining all thy fellows!
And when the blossom's husk is faded,
May the full fruit shoot forth
From out thy breast,
And ripen in the sunshine!

WOMAN.

God bless him! — Is he sleeping still?
To the fresh draught I nought can add,
Saving a crust of bread for thee to eat.

WANDERER.

I thank thee well.
How fair the verdure all around,
How green!

WOMAN.

My husband soon
Will home return
From labour. Tarry, tarry, man,
And with us eat our evening meal.

WANDERER.

Is it here ye dwell?

WOMAN.

Yonder, within those walls, we live.
My father 'twas who built the cottage
Of tiles and stones from out the ruins.
'Tis here we dwell.

He gave me to a husbandman,
And in our arms expired. —
Hast thou been sleeping, dearest heart?
How lively, and how full of play,
Sweet rogue!

WANDERER.

Nature, thou ever budding one,
Thou formest each for life's enjoyments,
And, like a mother, all thy children dear
Blessest with that sweet heritage, — a home.
The swallow builds the cornice round,
Unconscious of the beauties
She plasters up.
The caterpillar spins around the bough,
To make her brood a winter house;
And thou dost patch, between antiquity's
Most glorious relics,
For thy mean use,
O man, a humble cot, —
Enjoyest e'en mid tombs!
Farewell, thou happy woman!

WOMAN.

Thou wilt not stay, then?

WANDERER.

May God preserve thee,
And bless thy boy!

WOMAN.

A happy journey!

WANDERER.

Whither conducts the path
Across yon hill?

WOMAN.

To Cuma.

WANDERER.

How far from hence ?

WOMAN.

'Tis full three miles.

WANDERER.

Farewell!
O Nature, guide me on my way!
The wandering stranger guide,
Who o'er the tombs
Of holy bygone times
Is passing,
To a kind sheltering place,
From North winds safe,
And where a poplar grove
Shuts out the noontide ray!
And when I come
Home to my cot
At evening,
Illumined by the setting sun,
Let me embrace a wife like this,
Her infant in her arms!

THE DROPS OF NECTAR.

When Minerva, to give pleasure
To Prometheus, her well-loved one,
Brought a brimming bowl of nectar
From the glorious realms of heaven

As a blessing for his creatures,
And to pour into their bosoms
Impulses for arts ennobling,
She with rapid footstep hastened,
Fearing Jupiter might see her,
And the golden goblet trembled,
And there fell a few drops from it
On the verdant plain beneath her.
Then the busy bees flew thither
Straightway, eagerly to drink them,
And the butterfly came quickly
That he, too, might find a drop there;
Even the misshapen spider
Thither crawled and sucked with vigour.

To a happy end they tasted,
They, and other gentle insects!
For with mortals now divide they
Art — that noblest gift of all.

LOVE AS A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

On a rocky peak once sat I early,
Gazing on the mist with eyes unmoving;
Stretched out like a pall of grayish texture,
All things round, and all above it covered.

Suddenly a boy appeared beside me,
Saying "Friend, what meanest thou by gazing
On the vacant pall with such composure?
Hast thou lost for evermore all pleasure
Both in painting cunningly, and forming?"
On the child I gazed, and thought in secret:
"Would the boy pretend to be a master?"

"Wouldst thou be for ever dull and idle,"
Said the boy, "no wisdom thou'lt attain to;
See, I'll straightway paint for thee a figure, —
How to paint a beauteous figure, show thee."

And he then extended his forefinger —
(Ruddy was it as a youthful rosebud)
Toward the broad and far outstretching carpet,
And began to draw there with his finger.

First on high a radiant sun he painted,
Which upon mine eyes with splendour glistened,
And he made the clouds with golden border.
Through the clouds he let the sunbeams enter;

Painted then the soft and feathery summits
Of the fresh and quickened trees; behind them
One by one with freedom drew the mountains;
Underneath he left no lack of water,
But the river painted so like Nature,
That it seemed to glitter in the sunbeams,
That it seemed against its banks to murmur.

Ah, there blossomed flowers beside the river,
And bright colours gleamed upon the meadow,
Gold, and green, and purple, and enamelled,
All like carbuncles and emeralds seeming;

Bright and clear he added then the heavens,
And the blue-tinged mountains far and farther,
So that I, as though new-born, enraptured
Gazed on now the painter, now the picture.

Then spake he: "Although I have convinced thee
That this art I understand full surely,
Yet the hardest still is left to show thee."

Thereupon he traced with pointed finger,
And with anxious care, upon the forest,
At the utmost verge, where the strong sunbeams
From the shining ground appeared reflected,
Traced the figure of a lovely maiden,
Fair in form, and clad in graceful fashion;
Fresh the cheeks beneath her brown locks' ambush,
And the cheeks possessed the self-same colour
As the finger that had served to paint them.

"O thou boy!" exclaimed I then, "what master
In his school received thee as his pupil,
Teaching thee so truthfully and quickly
Wisely to begin, and well to finish?"

Whilst I still was speaking, lo, a zephyr
Softly rose, and set the tree-tops moving,
Curling all the wavelets on the river,
And the perfect maiden's veil, too, filled it,
And to make my wonderment still greater,
Soon the maiden set her foot in motion.
On she came, approaching toward the station
Where still sat I with my arch instructor.

As now all, yes, all thus moved together, —
Flowers, rivers, trees, the veil, — all moving, —
And the gentle foot of that most fair one,
Can ye think that on my rock I lingered,
Like a rock, as though fast-chained and silent?

GOD, SOUL, AND WORLD.

RHYMED DISTICHS.

[The Distichs, of which these are given as a specimen, are about forty in number.]

How? when? and where? — No answer comes from high;
Thou waitest for the *Because*, and yet thou askest not *Why?*

If the whole is ever to gladden thee,
That whole in the smallest thing thou must see.

Water its living strength first shows,
When obstacles its course oppose.

Transparent appears the radiant air,
Though steel and stone in its breast it may bear;
At length they'll meet with fiery power,
And metal and stones on the earth will shower.

Whate'er a living flame may surround,
No longer is shapeless, or earthly bound.
'Tis now invisible, flies from earth,
And hastens on high to the place of its birth.

This truth may be by all believed:
Whom God deceives, is well deceived.

Who trusts in God,
Fears not His rod.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF PLANTS.

Thou art confused, my belovèd, at seeing the thousand-fold union
Shown in this flowery troop over the garden dispersed;
Many a name dost thou hear assigned; one after another
Falls on thy listening ear, with a barbarian sound.
None resembleth another, yet all their forms have a likeness;
Therefore a mystical law is by the chorus proclaimed;
Yes, a sacred enigma! Oh, dearest friend, could I only
Happily teach thee the word, which may the mystery solve!
Closely observe how the plant, by little and little progressing,
Step by step guided on, changeth to blossom and fruit!
First from the seed it unravels itself, as soon as the silent
Fruit-bearing womb of the earth kindly allows its escape,
And to the charms of the light, the holy, the ever-in-motion,
Trusteth the delicate leaves, feebly beginning to shoot.
Simply slumbered the force in the seed; a germ of the future,
Peacefully locked in itself, 'neath the integument lay,
Leaf, and root, and bud, still void of colour, and shapeless;
Thus doth the kernel, while dry, cover that motionless life.

Upward then strives it to swell, in gentle moisture confiding,
And, from the night where it dwelt, straightway ascendeth to light.
Yet still simple remaineth its figure, when first it appeareth;
And 'tis a token like this, points out the child 'mid the plants.
Soon a shoot, succeeding it, rises on high, and reneweth,
Piling up node upon node, ever the primitive form;
Yet not ever alike; for the following leaf, as thou seest,
Ever produceth itself, fashioned in manifold ways.
Longer, more indented, in points and in parts more divided,
Which, all-deformed until now, slept in the organ below.
So at length it attaineth the noble and destined perfection,
Which, in full many a tribe, fills thee with wondering awe.
Many ribbed and toothed, on a surface juicy and swelling,
Free and unending the shoot seemeth in fulness to be;
Yet here Nature restraineth, with powerful hands, the formation,
And to a perfect end, guided with softness its growth,
Less abundantly yielding the sap, contracting the vessels,
So that the figure ere long gentler effects doth disclose.
Soon and in silence is checked the growth of the vigorous branches,
And the rib of the stalk fuller becometh in form.

Leafless, however, and quick the tenderer stem then upspringeth,
And a miraculous sight doth the observer enchant.
Ranged in a circle in numbers that now are small, and now countless,
Gather the small-sized leaves close by the side of their like.
Round the axis compressed the sheltering calyx unfoldeth,
And, as the perfectest type, brilliant-hued coronals forms.
Thus doth Nature bloom, in glory still nobler and fuller,
Showing, in order arranged, member on member upreared.
Wonderment fresh dost thou feel, as soon as the stem rears the flower
Over the scaffolding frail of the alternating leaves.
But this glory is only the new creation's foreteller,
Yes, the leaf with its hues feeleth the hand all divine,
And on a sudden contracteth itself; the tenderest figures,
Twofold as yet, hasten on, destined to blend into one.
Lovingly now the beauteous pairs are standing together,
Gathered in countless array, there where the altar is raised.
Hymen hovereth o'er them, and scents delicious and mighty
Stream forth their fragrance so sweet, all things enlivening around.
Presently, parcelled out, unnumbered germs are seen swelling,
Sweetly concealed in the womb, where is made perfect the fruit.

Here doth Nature close the ring of her forces eternal;
Yet doth a new one, at once, cling to the one gone before,
So that the chain be prolonged for ever through all generations,
And that the whole may have life, e'en as enjoyed by each part.
Now, my belovèd one, turn thy gaze on the many-hued thousands
Which, confusing no more, gladden the mind as they wave.
Every plant unto thee proclaimeth the laws everlasting,
Every floweret speaks louder and louder to thee;
But if thou here canst decipher the mystic words of the goddess,
Everywhere will they be seen, e'en though the features are changed.
Creeping insects may linger, the eager butterfly hasten, —
Plastic and forming, may man change e'en the figure decreed.
Oh, then, bethink thee, as well, how out of the germ of acquaintance,
Kindly intercourse sprang, slowly unfolding its leaves;
Soon how friendship with might unveiled itself in our bosoms,
And how Amor at length brought forth blossom and fruit!
Think of the manifold ways wherein Nature hath lent to our feelings,
Silently giving them birth, either the first or the last!
Yes, and rejoice in the present day! For love that is holy
Seeketh the noblest of fruits, — that where the thoughts are the same,

Where the opinions agree, — that the pair may, in rapt contemplation,
Lovingly blend into one, — find the more excellent world.

RELIGION AND CHURCH.

THOUGHTS ON JESUS CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL.

[The remarkable poem, of which this is a literal but faint representation, was written when Goethe was only sixteen years old. It derives additional interest from the fact of its being the very earliest piece of his that is preserved. The few other pieces included by Goethe under the title of "Religion and Church" are polemical, and devoid of interest to the English reader.]

What wondrous noise is heard around!
Through heaven exulting voices sound,
A mighty army marches on.
By thousand millions followed, lo,
To yon dark place makes haste to go
God's Son, descending from His throne!
He goes — the tempests round Him break,
As Judge and Hero cometh He;
He goes — the constellations quake,
The sun, the world quake fearfully.

I see Him in His victor-car,
On fiery axles borne afar,
Who on the cross for us expired.
The triumph to yon realms He shows, —
Remote from earth, where star ne'er glows, —
The triumph He for us acquired.
He cometh, Hell to extirpate,
Whom He, by dying well-nigh killed;
He shall pronounce her fearful fate;
Hark! now the curse is straight fulfilled.

Hell sees the victor come at last,
She feels that now her reign is past,
  She quakes and fears to meet His sight;
She knows His thunders' terrors dread,
In vain she seeks to hide her head,
  Attempts to fly, but vain is flight;
Vainly she hastes to 'scape pursuit
  And to avoid her Judge's eye;
The Lord's fierce wrath restrains her foot
  Like brazen chains, — she cannot fly.

Here lies the Dragon, trampled down,
He lies, and feels God's angry frown,
  He feels, and grinneth hideously;
He feels Hell's speechless agonies,
A thousand times he howls and sighs:
"Oh, burning flames! quick, swallow me!"
There lies he in the fiery waves,
  By torments racked and pangs infernal,
Instant annihilation craves,
  And hears, those pangs will be eternal.

Those mighty squadrons, too, are here,
The partners of his cursed career,
  Yet far less bad than he were they.
Here lies the countless throng combined,
In black and fearful crowds entwined,
  While round him fiery tempests play;
He sees how they the Judge avoid,
  He sees the storm upon them feed,
Yet is not at the sight o'erjoyed,
  Because his pangs e'en theirs exceed.

The Son of Man in triumph passes
Down to Hell's wild and black morasses,
  And there unfolds His majesty.
Hell cannot bear the bright array,

For, since her first created day,
Darkness alone e'er governed she.
She lay remote from ev'ry light,
With torments filled in Chaos here;
God turned for ever from her sight
His radiant feature's glory clear.

Within the realms she calls her own,
She sees the splendour of the Son,
His dreaded glories shining forth;
She sees Him clad in rolling thunder,
She sees the rocks all quake with wonder,
When God before her stands in wrath.
She sees He comes her Judge to be,
She feels the awful pangs inside her,
Herself to slay endeavours she,
But e'en this comfort is denied her.

Now looks she back, with pains untold,
Upon those happy times of old,
When all these glories gave her joy;
When yet her heart revered the truth,
When her glad soul in endless youth
And rapture dwelt, without alloy.
She calls to mind with maddened thought
How over man her wiles prevailed;
To take revenge on God she sought,
And feels the vengeance it entailed.

God was made man, and came to earth.
Then Satan cried with fearful mirth:
"E'en He my victim now shall be!"
He sought to slay the Lord Most High,
The world's Creator now must die;
But, Satan, endless woe to thee!

Thou thought'st to overcome Him then,
Rejoicing in His suffering:
But He in triumph comes again
To bind thee: Death! where is thy sting?

Speak, Hell! where is thy victory?
Thy power destroyed and scattered see!
Know'st thou not now the Highest's might?
See, Satan, see thy rule o'erthrown!
By thousand-varying pangs weighed down,
Thou dwell'st in dark and endless night.
As though by lightning struck thou liest,
No gleam of rapture far or wide;
In vain! no hope thou there descriest, —
For me alone Messiah died!

A howling rises through the air,
A trembling fills each dark vault there,
When Christ to Hell is seen to come.
She snarls with rage, but needs must cower
Before our mighty hero's power;
He signs — and Hell is straightway dumb.
Before His voice the thunders break,
On high His victor-banner blows;
E'en angels at His fury quake,
When Christ to the dread judgment goes.

Now speaks He, and His voice is thunder,
He speaks, the rocks are rent in sunder,
His breath is like devouring flames.
Thus speaks He: "Tremble, ye accursed!
He who from Eden hurled you erst,
Your kingdom's overthrow proclaims.
Look up! My children once were ye,
Your arms against Me then ye turned,
Ye fell, that ye might sinners be,
Ye've now the wages that ye earned.

"My greatest foemen from that day,
Ye led my dearest friends astray, —
As ye had fallen, man must fall.
To kill him evermore ye sought,
'They all shall die the death,' ye thought;
But how! for Me I've won them all.
For them alone did I descend,
For them prayed, suffered, perished I.
Ye ne'er shall gain your wicked end;
Who trust in Me shall never die.

"In endless chains here lie ye now,
Nothing can save you from the slough,
Not boldness, not regret for crime.
Lie, then, and writhe in brimstone fire!
'Twas ye yourselves drew down Mine ire.
Lie and lament throughout all time!
And also ye, whom I selected,
E'en ye for ever I disown,
For ye My saving grace rejected:
Ye murmur? blame yourselves alone!

"Ye might have lived with Me in bliss,
For I of yore had promised this;
Ye sinned, and all my prospects slighted;
Wrapped in the sleep of sin ye dwelt,
Now is My fearful judgment felt,
By a just doom your guilt requited."—
Thus spake He, and a fearful storm
From Him proceeds, the lightnings glow,
The thunders seize each wicked form,
And hurl them in a gulf below.

The God-man closeth Hell's sad doors;
In all His majesty He soars
From those dark regions back to light.
He sitteth at the Father's side;

Oh, friends, what joy doth this betide!
For us, for us He still will fight!
The angels' sacred choir around
Rejoice before the mighty Lord,
So that all creatures hear the sound:
"Zebaoth's God be aye adored!"

PROVERBS.

A THOUSAND flies did I at even slay,
Yet did one wake me at the break of day.

WHO serves the public is a sorry beast;
He frets himself; no one thanks him the least.

WOULDST thou nothing useless buy,
Be sure the fairs you go not nigh.

I COULD no greater sorrow own
Than live in Paradise alone.

TAME XENIA.

[The Epigrams bearing the title of "Xenia" were written by Goethe and Schiller together, having been first occasioned by some violent attacks made on them by some insignificant writers. They are extremely numerous, but scarcely any of them could be translated into English. Those here given are merely presented as a specimen.]

GOD gave to mortals birth,
In his own image, too;
Then came himself to earth,
A mortal kind and true.

Barbarians oft endeavour
Gods for themselves to make;
But they're more hideous ever
Than dragon or than snake.

"What is science, rightly known?"
'Tis the strength of life alone.
Life canst thou engender never,
Life must be life's parent ever

It matters not, I ween,
Where worms our friends consume,
Beneath the turf so green,
Or 'neath a marble tomb.
Remember, ye who live,
Though frowns the fleeting day,
That to your friends ye give
What never will decay.

What shall I teach thee, the very first thing? —
Fain would I learn o'er my shadow to spring!

EXCULPATION.

Wilt thou dare to blame the woman for her seeming
sudden changes,
Swaying east and swaying westward, as the breezes
shake the tree?
Fool! thy selfish thought misguides thee — find the
man that never ranges;
Woman wavers but to seek him — is not then the
fault in thee?

PHOŒMION.

In His blest name, who was His own creation,
Who from all time makes *making* his vocation;
The name of Him who makes our faith so bright,
Love, confidence, activity, and might;
In that One's name, who, named though oft He be,
Unknown is ever in Reality:
As far as ear can reach, or eyesight dim,
Thou findest but the known resembling Him;
How high soe'er thy fiery spirit hovers,
Its simile and type it straight discovers;
Onward thou'rt drawn, with feelings light and gay,
Where e'er thou goest, smiling is the way;
No more thou numberest, reckonest no time,
Each step is infinite, each step sublime.

What God would *outwardly* alone control,
And on his finger whirl the mighty Whole?
He loves the *inner* world to move, to view
Nature in Him, Himself in Nature, too,
So that what in Him works, and is, and lives,
The measure of His strength, His spirit gives.

Within us all a universe doth dwell;
And hence each people's usage laudable,
That every one the Best that meets his eyes
As God, yea, e'en *his* God, doth recognise;
To Him both earth and heaven surrenders he,
Fears Him, and loves Him, too, if that may be.

THE PARK.

How beautiful! A garden fair is heaven,
Flowers of all hues, and smiling in the sun,
Where all was waste and wilderness before.
Well do ye imitate, ye gods of earth,
The great Creator. Rock, and lake, and glade,
Birds, fishes, and untamed beasts are here.
Your work were all an Eden but for this —
Here is no man unconscious of a pang,
No perfect Sabbath of unbroken rest.

ANTIQUES.

LEOPOLD, DUKE OF BRUNSWICK.

[Written on the occasion of the death, by drowning, of that prince.]

Thou wert forcibly seized by the hoary lord of the river, —
Holding thee, ever he shares with thee his streaming domain.
Calmly sleepest thou near his urn as it silently trickles,
Till thou to action art roused, waked by the swift-rolling flood.
Kindly be to the people, as when thou still wert a mortal.
Perfecting that as a god, which thou didst fail in, as man.

ANACREON'S GRAVE.

Where the rose is fresh and blooming — where the vine and myrtle spring —
Where the turtle-dove is cooing — where the gay cicalas sing —
Whose may be the grave surrounded with such store of comely grace,
Like a God-created garden? 'Tis Anacreon's resting-place.
Spring and summer and the autumn poured their gifts around the bard,
And, ere winter came to chill him, sound he slept beneath the sward.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

Lightly doth the furrow fold the golden grain within its breast,
Deeper shroud, old man, shall cover in thy limbs when laid at rest.
Blithely plough, and sow as blithely! Here are springs of mortal cheer,
And when e'en the grave is closing, Hope is ever standing near.

THE BROTHERS.

Slumber, Sleep — they were two brothers, servants to the Gods above:
Kind Prometheus lured them downwards, ever filled with earthly love;
But what Gods could bear so lightly, pressed too hard on men beneath.
Slumber did his brother's duty — Sleep was deepened into Death.

LOVE'S HOUR-GLASS.

Eros! wherefore do I see thee, with the glass in either hand?
Fickle god! with double measure wouldst thou count the shifting sand?
"*This* one flows for parted lovers — slowly drops each tiny bead —
That is for the days of dalliance, and it melts with golden speed."

WARNING.

Do not touch him — do not wake him! Fast asleep is Amor lying;
Go — fulfil thy work appointed — do thy labour of the day.
Thus the wise and careful mother uses every moment flying,
Whilst her child is in the cradle — Slumbers pass too soon away.

PHILOMELA.

Surely, surely, Amor nursed thee, songstress of the plaintive note,
And, in fond and childish fancy, fed thee from his pointed dart.
So, sweet Philomel, the poison sunk into thy guileless throat,
Till, with all love's weight of passion, strike its notes to every heart.

THE CHOSEN ROCK.

HERE, in the hush and stillness of mid-noon,
The lover lay, and thought upon his love;
With blithesome voice he spoke to me: "Be thou
My witness, stone! — Yet, therefore, vaunt thee not,
For thou hast many partners of my joy —
To every rock that crowns this grassy dell,
And looks on me and my felicity;
To every forest-stem that I embrace
In my entrancement as I roam along,
Stand thou for a memorial of my bliss!
All mingle with my rapture, and to all
I lift a consecrating cry of joy.
Yet do I lend a voice to thee alone,
As culls the Muse some favourite from the crowd,
And, with a kiss, inspires for evermore."

SOLITUDE.

OH, ye kindly nymphs, who dwell 'mongst the rocks and the thickets,
  Grant unto each whatsoever he may in silence desire!
Comfort impart to the mourner, and give to the doubter instruction,
  And let the lover rejoice, finding the bliss that he craves.
For from the gods ye received what they ever denied unto mortals,
  Power to comfort and aid all who in you may confide.

HOLY FAMILY.

O CHILD of beauty rare —
O mother chaste and fair —
How happy seemed they both, so far beyond compare!
She in her infant blest,
And he in conscious rest,
Nestling within the soft warm cradle of her breast!
What joy that sight might bear
To him who sees them there,
If, with a pure and guilt-untroubled eye,
He looked upon the twain, like Joseph standing by.

THE MUSES' MIRROR.

EARLY one day, the Muse, when eagerly bent on adornment,
Followed a swift-running streamlet, the quietest nook by it seeking.
Quickly and noisily flowing, the changeful surface distorted
Ever her moving form; the goddess departed in anger.
Yet the stream called mockingly after her, saying: "What, truly!
Wilt thou not view, then, the truth, in my mirror so clearly depicted?"
But she already was far away, on the brink of the ocean,
In her figure rejoicing, and duly arranging her garland.

THE TEACHERS.

WHAT time Diogenes, unmoved and still,
Lay in his tub, and basked him in the sun —
What time Calanus clomb, with lightsome step
And smiling cheek, up to his fiery tomb —

What rare examples there for Philip's son
To curb his overmastering lust of sway,
But that the Lord of the majestic world
Was all too great for lessons even like these!

MARRIAGE UNEQUAL.

Alas, that even in a heavenly marriage,
The fairest lots should ne'er be reconciled!
Psyche waxed old, and prudent in her carriage,
Whilst Cupid evermore remains the child.

PHŒBUS AND HERMES.

The deep-browed lord of Delos once, and Maia's nimble-witted son,
Contended eagerly by whom the prize of glory should be won;
Hermes longed to grasp the lyre, — the lyre Apollo hoped to gain,
And both their hearts were full of hope, and yet the hopes of both were vain.
For Ares, to decide the strife, between them rudely dashed in ire,
And waving high his falchion keen, he cleft in twain the golden lyre.
Loud Hermes laughed maliciously, but at the direful deed did fall
The deepest grief upon the heart of Phœbus and the Muses all.

THE WREATHS.

Our German Klopstock, if he had his will,
Would bar us from the skirts of Pindus old;
No more the classic laurel should be prized,
But the rough leaflets of our native oak

Alone should glisten in the poet's hair;
Yet did himself, with spirit unreclaimed
From first allegiance to those early gods,
Lead up to Golgotha's most awful height
With more than epic pomp the new Crusade.
But let him range the bright angelic host
On either hill — no matter. By his grave
All gentle hearts should bow them down and weep
For where a hero and a saint have died,
Or where a poet sung prophetical,
Dying as greatly as they greatly lived,
To give memorial to all after-times,
Of lofty worth and courage undismayed;
There, in mute reverence, all devoutly kneel,
In homage of the thorn and laurel wreath,
That were at once their glory and their pang!

THE NEW LOVE.

Love, not the simple youth that whilom wound
Himself about young Psyche's heart, looked round
Olympus with a cold and roving eye,
That had accustomed been to victory.
It rested on a Goddess, noblest far
Of all that noble throng — glorious star —
Venus Urania. And from that hour
He loved her. Ah! to his resistless power
Even she, the holy one, did yield at last,
And in his daring arms he held her fast.
A new and beauteous Love from that embrace
Had birth, which to the mother owed his grace
And purity of soul, whilst from his sire
He borrowed all his passion, all his fire.
Him ever, where the gracious Muses be,
Thou'lt surely find. Such sweet society
Is his delight, and his sharp-pointed dart
Doth rouse within men's breasts the love of Art.

THE CONSECRATED SPOT.

When in the dance of the Nymphs, in the moonlight so holy assembled,
Mingle the Graces, down from Olympus in secret descending,
Here doth the minstrel hide, and list to their numbers enthralling,
Here doth he watch their silent dances' mysterious measure.

SAKONTALA.

Wouldst thou the blossoms of spring, as well as the fruits of the autumn,
Wouldst thou what charms and delights, wouldst thou what plenteously feeds,
Wouldst thou include both heaven and earth in one designation,
All that is needed is done, when I Sakontala name.

Yesterday thy head was brown, as are the flowing locks of love;
In the bright blue sky I watched thee towering, giant-like above.
Now thy summit, white and hoary, glitters all with silver snow,
Which the stormy night hath shaken from its robes upon thy brow;
And I know that youth and age are bound with such mysterious meaning,
As the days are linked together, one short dream but intervening.

DISTICHS.

Chords are touched by Apollo, — the death-laden bow, too, he bendeth;
While he the shepherdess charms, Python he lays in the dust.

What is merciful censure? to make thy faults appear smaller?
May be to veil them? No, no! O'er them to raise thee on high!

Democratic food soon cloys on the multitude's stomach;
But I'll wager, ere long, other thou'lt give them instead.

What in France has passed by, the Germans continue to practise,
For the proudest of men flatters the people and fawns.

Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others,
And in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own.

Not in the morning alone, not only at mid-day he charmeth;
Even at setting, the sun is still the same glorious planet.

THE CHINAMAN IN ROME.

In Rome I saw a stranger from Pekin:
Uncouth and heavy to his eye appeared
The mingled piles of old and modern time.
"Alas!" he said, what wretched taste is here!
When will they learn to stretch the airy roof
On light pilastered shafts of varnished wood —
Gain the fine sense, and educated eye,
Which only finds in lacquer, carvings quaint,
And variegated tintings, pure delight?"
Hearing these words, unto myself I said,
"Behold the type of many a moon-struck bard,
Who vaunts his tissue, woven of a dream,
'Gainst nature's tapestry, that lasts for aye,
Proclaims as sick the truly sound; and this,
That he, the truly sick, may pass for sound!"

PERFECT BLISS.

All the divine perfections, which whilere
Nature in thrift doled out 'mongst many a fair,
She showered with open hand, thou peerless one, on thee!
And she that was so wondrously endowed,
To whom a throng of noble knees were bowed,
Gave all — Love's perfect gift — her glorious self, to me!

PROVERBS.

A breach is every day,
By many a mortal stormed;
Let them fall in the gaps as they may,
Yet a heap of dead is ne'er formed.

What harm has thy poor mirror done, alas?
Look not so ugly, prythee, in the glass!

One of the mightiest actions is that
When one fries himself in his own fat.

VENETIAN EPIGRAMS.

(Written in 1790.)

Urn and sarcophagus erst were with life adorned by the heathen;
Fauns are dancing around, while with the Bacchanal troop
Checkered circles they trace; and the goat-footed, puffy-cheeked player
Wildly produceth hoarse tones out of the clamorous horn.
Cymbals and drums resound; we see and we hear, too, the marble.
Fluttering bird! oh, how sweet tastes the ripe fruit to thy bill!
Noise there is none to disturb thee, still less to scare away Amor,
Who, in the midst of the throng, learns to delight in his torch.
Thus doth fulness overcome death; and the ashes there covered
Seem, in that silent domain, still to be gladdened with life.
Thus may the minstrel's sarcophagus be hereafter surrounded
With such a scroll, which himself richly with life has adorned.

Clasped in my arms for ever eagerly hold I my mistress,
Ever my panting heart throbs wildly against her dear breast,
And on her knees for ever is leaning my head, while I'm gazing
Now on her sweet smiling mouth, now on her bright sparkling eyes.
"Oh, thou effeminate!" spake one, "and thus, then, thy days thou art spending?"
Ah, they in sorrow are spent. List while I tell thee my tale:
Yes! I have left my only joy in life far behind me,
Twenty long days hath my car borne me away from her sight.
Vetturini defy me, while crafty chamberlains flatter,
And the sly *valet de place* thinks but of lies and deceit.
If I attempt to escape, the postmaster fastens upon me,
Postboys the upper hand get, custom-house duties enrage.
"Truly, I can't understand thee! thou talkest enigmas! thou seemest
Wrapped in a blissful repose, glad as Rinaldo of yore:" —
Ah, I myself understand full well; 'tis my body that travels,
And 'tis my spirit that rests still in my mistress's arms.

I would liken this gondola unto the soft-rocking cradle,
And the chest on its deck seems a vast coffin to be.
Yes! 'tween the cradle and coffin, we totter and waver for ever
On the mighty canal, careless our lifetime is spent,

Why are the people thus busily moving? For food they are seeking,
Children they fain would beget, feeding them well as they can.
Traveller, mark this well, and when thou art home, do thou likewise!
More can no mortal effect, work with what ardour he will.

I would compare to the land this anvil, its lord to the hammer,
And to the people the plate, which in the middle is bent.
Sad is the poor tin-plate's lot, when the blows are but given at random:
Ne'er will the kettle be made, while they uncertainly fall.

What is the life of a man? Yet thousands are ever accustomed
Freely to talk about man, — what he has done, too, and how.
Even less is a poem; yet thousands read and enjoy it,
Thousands abuse it. — My friend, live and continue to rhyme!

Merry's the trade of a poet; but somewhat a dear one, I fear me;
For, as my book grows apace, all my sequins I lose.

If thou'rt in earnest, no longer delay, but render me happy;
Art thou in jest? Ah, sweet love! time for all jesting is past.

Art thou, then, vexed at my silence? What shall I speak of? Thou markest
Neither my sorrowful sigh, nor my soft eloquent look.
Only one goddess is able the seal of my lips to unloosen, —
When by Aurora I'm found, slumbering calm on thy breast.
Ah, then my hymn in the ears of the earliest gods shall be chanted,
As the Memnonian form breathed forth sweet secrets in song.

In the twilight of morning to climb to the top of the mountain, —
Thee to salute, kindly star, earliest herald of day, —
And to await, with impatience, the gaze of the ruler of heaven, —
Youthful delight, oh, how oft lurest thou me out in the night!
Oh, ye heralds of day, ye heavenly eyes of my mistress,
Now ye appear, and the sun evermore riseth too soon.

Thou art amazed, and dost point to the ocean. It seems to be burning;
Flame-crested billows in play dart round our night-moving bark.
Me it astonisheth not, — of the ocean was born Aphrodite, —
Did not a flame, too, proceed from her for us, in her son?

Gleaming the ocean appeared, the beauteous billows were smiling,
While a fresh, favouring wind, filling the sails, drove us on.

Free was my bosom from yearning; yet soon my languishing glances
Turned themselves backward in haste, seeking the snow-covered hills.
Treasures unnumbered are southwards lying. Yet one to the northwards
Draws me resistlessly back, like the strong magnet in force.

Spacious and fair is the world; yet oh! how I thank the kind heavens
That I a garden possess, small though it be, yet mine own.
One which enticeth me homewards; why should a gardener wander?
Honour and pleasure he finds, when to his garden he looks.

Ah, my maiden is going! she mounts the vessel! My monarch,
Æolus! potentate dread! keep every storm far away!
"Oh, thou fool!" cried the god: "ne'er fear the blustering tempest;
When Love flutters his wings, then mayest thou dread the soft breeze."

ELEGIES.

PART I.

ROMAN ELEGIES.

[The "Roman Elegies" were written in the same year as the "Venetian Epigrams" — viz., 1790.]

SPEAK, ye stones, I entreat! Oh, speak, ye palaces lofty!
Utter a word, oh, ye streets! Wilt thou not, Genius, awake?
All that thy sacred walls, eternal Rome, hold within them
Teemeth with life; but to *me* all is still silent and dead.
Oh, who will whisper unto me, — when shall I see at the casement
That one beauteous form, which, while it scorcheth, revives?
Can I as yet not discern the road, on which I for ever
To her and from her shall go, heeding not time as it flies?
Still do I mark the churches, palaces, ruins, and columns,
As a wise traveller should, would he his journey improve.
Soon all this will be past; and then will there be but *one* temple,
Amor's temple alone, where the Initiate may go.
Thou art indeed a world, O Rome; and yet were Love absent,
Then would the world be no world, then would e'en Rome be no Rome.

Do not repent, mine own love, that thou so soon didst surrender!
Trust me, I deem thee not bold! reverence only I feel.
Manifold workings the darts of Amor possess; some but scratching,
Yet, with insidious effect, poison the bosom for years.
Others mightily feathered, with fresh and newly-born sharpness,
Pierce to the innermost bone, kindle the blood into flame.
In the heroical times, when loved each god and each goddess,
Longing attended on sight; then with fruition was blessed.
Thinkest thou the goddess had long been thinking of love and its pleasures
When she, in Ida's retreats, owned to Anchises her flame?
Had but Luna delayed to kiss the beautiful sleeper,
Oh, by Aurora, ere long, he had in envy been roused!
Hero Leander espied at the noisy feast, and the lover
Hotly and nimbly, ere long, plunged in the night-covered flood.
Rhea Silvia, virgin princess, roamed near the Tiber,
Seeking there water to draw, when by the god she was seized.
Thus were the sons of Mars begotten! The twins did a she-wolf
Suckle and nurture, — and Rome called herself queen of the world.

Alexander, and Cæsar, and Henry, and Frederick, the mighty,
On me would gladly bestow half of the glory they earned,

Could I but grant unto each one night on the couch where I'm lying;
But they, by Orcus' night, sternly, alas! are held down.
Therefore rejoice, O thou living one, blest in thy love-lighted homestead,
Ere the dark Lethe's sad wave wetteth thy fugitive foot.

These few leaves, O ye Graces, a bard presents, in your honour,
On your altar so pure, adding sweet rosebuds as well,
And he does it with hope. The artist is glad in his workshop,
When a Pantheon it seems round him for ever to bring.
Jupiter knits his godlike brow, — hers, Juno uplifteth;
Phœbus strides on before, shaking his curly-locked head;
Calmly and dryly Minerva looks down, and Hermes, the light one,
Turneth his glances aside, roguish and tender at once.
But toward Bacchus, the yielding, the dreaming, raiseth Cythere
Looks both longing and sweet, e'en in the marble yet moist.
Of his embraces she thinks with delight, and seems to be asking: —
"Should not our glorious son take up his place by our side?"

Amor is ever a rogue, and all who believe him are cheated!
To me the hypocrite came: "Trust me, I pray thee, this once.

Honest is now my intent, — with grateful thanks I acknowledge
That thou thy life and thy works hast to my worship ordained.
See, I have followed thee hither, to Rome, with kindly intention,
Hoping to give thee mine aid, e'en in the foreigner's land.
Every traveller complains that the quarters he meets with are wretched;
Happily lodged, though, is he, who is by Amor received.
Thou dost observe the ruins of ancient buildings with wonder,
Thoughtfully wandering on, over each time-hallowed spot.
Thou dost honour still more the worthy relics created
By the few artists whom *I* loved in their studios to seek.
I 'twas fashioned those forms! thy pardon, — I boast not at present;
Presently thou shalt confess, that what I tell thee is true.
Now that thou servest me more idly, where are the beauteous figures,
Where are the colours, the light, which thy creations once filled?
Hast thou a mind again to form? The school of the Grecians
Still remains open, my friend; years have not barred up its doors.
I, the teacher, am ever young, and love all the youthful,
Love not the subtle and old; Mother, observe what I say!
Still was new the Antique, when yonder blest ones were living;
Happily live, and in thee, ages long vanished will live!

Food for song, where hopest thou to find it? I only can give it,
And a more excellent style, love, and love only can teach."
Thus did the Sophist discourse. What mortal, alas! could resist him?
And when a master commands, I have been trained to obey.
Now he deceitfully keeps his word, gives food for my numbers,
But, while he does so, alas! robs me of time, strength, and mind.
Looks, and pressure of hands, and words of kindness, and kisses,
Syllables teeming with thought, by a fond pair are exchanged.
Then becomes whispering talk, — and stammering, a language enchanting.
Free from all prosody's rules, dies such a hymn on the ear.
Thee, Aurora, I used to own as the friend of the Muses;
Hath, then, Amor the rogue cheated, Aurora, e'en thee?
Thou dost appear to me now as his friend, and again dost awake me
Unto a day of delight, while at his altar I kneel.
All her locks I find on my bosom, her head is reposing,
Pressing with softness the arm, which round her neck is entwined;
Oh! what a joyous awakening, ye hours so peaceful, succeeded,
Monument sweet of the bliss which had first rocked us to sleep!
In her slumber she moves, and sinks, while her face is averted,
Far on the breadth of the couch, leaving her hand still in mine.

Heartfelt love unites us for ever, and yearnings unsullied,
And our cravings alone claim for themselves the exchange.
One faint touch of the hand, and her eyes so heavenly see I
Once more open. Ah, no! let me still look on that form!
Closed still remain! Ye make me confused and drunken, ye rob me
Far too soon of the bliss pure contemplation affords.
Mighty, indeed, are these figures! these limbs, how gracefully rounded!
Theseus, could'st thou e'er fly, whilst Ariadne thus slept?
Only one single kiss on these lips! O Theseus, now leave us!
Gaze on her eyes! she awakes! — Firmly she holds thee embraced!

PART II.

ALEXIS AND DORA.

[This beautiful poem was first published in Schiller's *Horen.*]

Farther and farther away, alas! at each moment the vessel
Hastens, as onward it glides, cleaving the foam-covered flood!
Long is the track ploughed up by the keel where dolphins are sporting,
Following fast in its rear, while it seems flying pursuit.

All forebodes a prosperous voyage; the sailor with calmness
Leans 'gainst the sail, which alone all that is needed performs.
Forward presses the heart of each seaman, like colours and streamers;
Backward one only is seen, mournfully fixed near the mast,
While on the blue-tinged mountains, which fast are receding, he gazeth,
And as they sink in the sea, joy from his bosom departs.
Vanished from thee, too, O Dora, is now the vessel that robs thee
Of thine Alexis, thy friend, — ah, thy betrothèd as well!
Thou, too, art after me gazing in vain. Our hearts are still throbbing,
Though, for each other, yet, ah! 'gainst one another no more.
Oh, thou single moment wherein I found life! thou outweighest
Every day which had else coldly from memory fled.
'Twas in that moment alone, the last, that upon me descended
Life, such as deities grant, though thou perceived'st it not.
Phœbus, in vain with thy rays dost thou clothe the ether in glory:
Thine all-brightening day hateful alone is to me.
Into myself I retreat for shelter, and there, in the silence,
Strive to recover the time when she appeared with each day.
Was it possible beauty like this to see, and not feel it?
Worked not those heavenly charms e'en on a mind dull as thine?

Blame not thyself, unhappy one! Oft doth the bard an enigma
Thus propose to the throng, skilfully hidden in words.
Each one enjoys the strange commingling of images graceful,
Yet still is wanting the word which will discover the sense.
When at length it is found, the heart of each hearer is gladdened,
And in the poem he sees meaning of twofold delight.
Wherefore so late didst thou remove the bandage, O Amor,
Which thou hadst placed o'er mine eyes, — wherefore remove it so late?
Long did the vessel, when laden, lie waiting for favouring breezes,
Till in kindness the wind blew from the land o'er the sea.
Vacant times of youth! and vacant dreams of the future!
Ye all vanish, and nought, saving the moment, remains.
Yes! it remains, — my joy still remains! I hold thee, my Dora,
And thine image alone, Dora, by hope is disclosed.
Oft have I seen thee go, with modesty clad, to the temple,
While thy mother so dear solemnly went by thy side.
Eager and nimble thou wert, in bearing thy fruit to the market,
Boldly the pail from the well didst thou sustain on thy head.
Then was revealed thy neck, then seen thy shoulders so beauteous,
Then, before all things, the grace filling thy motions was seen.

Oft have I feared that the pitcher perchance was in danger of falling,
Yet it ever remained firm on the circular cloth.
Thus, fair neighbour, yes, thus I oft was wont to observe thee,
As on the stars I might gaze, as I might gaze on the moon,
Glad indeed at the sight, yet feeling within my calm bosom
Not the remotest desire ever to call them mine own.
Years thus fleeted away! Although our houses were only
Twenty paces apart, yet I thy threshold ne'er crossed.
Now by the fearful flood are we parted! Thou liest to Heaven,
Billow! thy beautiful blue seems to me dark as the night.
All were now in movement: a boy to the house of my father
Ran at full speed and exclaimed: "Hasten thee quick to the strand!
Hoisted the sail is already, e'en now in the wind it is fluttering,
While the anchor they weigh, heaving it up from the sand;
Come, Alexis, oh, come!" — My worthy stout-hearted father
Pressed, with a blessing, his hand down on my curly-locked head,
While my mother carefully reached me a newly-made bundle;
"Happy may'st thou return!" cried they — "both happy and rich!"
Then I sprang away, and under my arm held the bundle,
Running along by the wall. Standing I found thee hard by,

At the door of thy garden. Thou smilingly saidst then: "Alexis!
Say, are yon boisterous crew going thy comrades to be?
Foreign coasts wilt thou visit, and precious merchandise purchase,
Ornaments meet for the rich matrons who dwell in the town;
Bring me, also, I pray thee, a light chain; gladly I'll pay thee,
Oft have I wished to possess some such trinket as that."
There I remained, and asked, as merchants are wont, with precision
After the form and the weight which thy commission should have.
Modest, indeed, was the price thou didst name! I meanwhile was gazing
On thy neck, which deserved ornaments worn but by queens.
Loudly now rose the cry from the ship; then kindly thou spakest: —
"Take, I entreat thee, some fruit out of the garden, my friend!
Take the ripest oranges, figs of the whitest; the ocean
Beareth no fruit, and, in truth, 'tis not produced by each land."
So I entered in. Thou pluckedst the fruit from the branches,
And the burden of gold was in thine apron upheld.
Oft did I cry, enough! But fairer fruits were still falling
Into thy hand as I spake, ever obeying thy touch.
Presently didst thou reach the arbour; there lay there a basket,
Sweet blooming myrtle-trees waved, as we drew nigh, o'er our heads.

Then thou began'st to arrange the fruit with skill and in silence:
First the orange, which lay heavy as though 'twere of gold,
Then the yielding fig, by the slightest pressure disfigured,
And with myrtle the gift soon was both covered and graced.
But I raised it not up. I stood. Our eyes met together,
And my eyesight grew dim, seeming obscured by a film.
Soon I felt thy bosom on mine! Mine arm was soon twining
Round thy beautiful form; thousand times kissed I thy neck.
On my shoulder sank thy head; thy fair arms, encircling,
Soon rendered perfect the ring knitting the rapturous pair.
Amor's hands I felt: he pressed us together with ardour,
And, from the firmament clear, thrice did it thunder; then tears
Streamed from mine eyes in torrents, thou weptest, I wept, both were weeping,
And, 'mid our sorrow and bliss, even the world seemed to die.
Louder and louder they called from the strand; my feet would no longer
Bear my weight, and I cried: "Dora! and art thou not mine?"
"Thine for ever!" thou gently didst say. Then the tears we were shedding
Seemed to be wiped from our eyes, as by the breath of a god.

Nearer was heard the cry "Alexis!" The stripling who sought me
Suddenly peeped through the door. How he the basket snatched up!
How he urged me away! how pressed I thy hand! Dost thou ask me
How the vessel I reached? Drunken I seemed, well I know.
Drunken my shipmates believed me, and so had pity upon me;
And as the breeze drove us on, distance the town soon obscured.
"Thine for ever!" thou, Dora, didst murmur; it fell on my senses
With the thunder of Zeus! while by the thunderer's throne
Stood his daughter, the Goddess of Love; the Graces were standing
Close by her side! so the bond beareth an impress divine!
Oh, then hasten, thou ship, with every favouring zephyr!
Onward, thou powerful keel, cleaving the waves as they foam!
Bring me unto the foreign harbour, so that the goldsmith
May in his workshop prepare straightway the heavenly pledge!
Ay, of a truth, the chain shall indeed be a chain, O my Dora!
Nine times encircling thy neck, loosely around it entwined.
Other and manifold trinkets I'll buy thee; gold-mounted bracelets,
Richly and skilfully wrought, also shall grace thy fair hand.

There shall the ruby and emerald vie, the sapphire so lovely
Be to the jacinth opposed, seeming its foil; while the gold
Holds all the jewels together, in beauteous union commingled.
Oh, how the bridegroom exults, when he adorns his betrothed!
Pearls if I see, of thee they remind me; each ring that is shown me
Brings to my mind thy fair hand's graceful and tapering form.
I will barter and buy; the fairest of all shalt thou choose thee,
Joyously would I devote all of the cargo to thee.
Yet not trinkets and jewels alone is thy loved one procuring;
With them he brings thee whate'er gives to a housewife delight.
Fine and woollen coverlets, wrought with an edging of purple,
Fit for a couch where we both, lovingly, gently may rest;
Costly pieces of linen. Thou sittest and sewest, and clothest
Me, and thyself, and, perchance, even a third with it too.
Visions of hope, deceive ye my heart! Ye kindly Immortals,
Soften this fierce-raging flame, wildly pervading my breast!
Yet how I long to feel them again, those rapturous torments,
When, in their stead, care draws nigh, coldly and fearfully calm.
Neither the Furies' torch, nor the hounds of hell with their barking

Awe the delinquent so much, down in the plains of despair,
As by the motionless spectre I'm awed, that shows me the fair one
Far away; of a truth, open the garden-door stands!
And another one cometh! For him the fruit, too, is falling,
And for him, also, the fig strengthening honey doth yield!
Doth she entice him as well to the arbour? He follows? Oh, make me
Blind, ye Immortals! efface visions like this from my mind!
Yes, she is but a maiden! And she who to one doth so quickly
Yield, to another ere long, doubtless, will turn herself round.
Smile not, Zeus, for this once, at an oath so cruelly broken!
Thunder more fearfully! Strike! — Stay — thy fierce lightnings withhold!
Hurl at me thy quivering bolt! In the darkness of midnight
Strike with thy lightning this mast, make it a pitiful wreck!
Scatter the planks all around, and give to the boisterous billows
All these wares, and let *me* be to the dolphins a prey! —
Now, ye Muses, enough! In vain would ye strive to depicture
How, in a love-laden breast, anguish alternates with bliss.
Ye cannot heal the wounds, it is true, that love hath inflicted;
Yet from you only proceeds, kindly ones, comfort and balm.

SONG OF THE FATES.

FROM IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

ACT IV. SCENE 5.

Ye children of mortals
The deities dread!
The mastery hold they
In hands all eternal,
And use them, unquestioned,
What manner they like.

Let *him* fear them doubly,
Whom they have uplifted!
On cliffs and on clouds, lo,
Round tables all-golden,
The seats are made ready.
When rises contention,
The guests are hurled downward
With shame and dishonour
To deep depths of midnight,
And vainly await they,
Bound fast in the darkness,
A just condemnation.

But *they* remain ever
In firmness unshaken
Round tables all-golden.
On stride they from mountain
To mountain far distant:
From out the abysses'
Dark jaws, the breath rises
Of torment-choked Titans
Up tow'rd them, like incense
In light clouds ascending.

The rulers immortal
Avert from whole peoples
Their blessing-fraught glances,
And shun, in the children,
To trace the once cherished,
Still eloquent features
Their ancestors wore.

Thus chanted the Parcæ;
The old man, the banished,
In gloomy vault lying,
Their song overheareth,
Sons, grandsons rememb'reth,
And shaketh his head.

Songs from Various Plays, Etc.

FROM FAUST.

I.

DEDICATION.

Ye shadowy forms, again ye're drawing near,
So wont of yore to meet my troubled gaze!
Were it in vain to seek to keep you here?
Loves still my heart that dream of olden days?
Oh, come, then! and in pristine force appear,
Parting the vapoury mist that round me plays!
My bosom finds its youthful strength again,
Feeling the magic breeze that marks your train.

Ye bring the forms of happy days of yore,
And many a shadow loved attends you, too;
Like some old lay, whose dream was well-nigh o'er,
First love appears again, and friendship true;
Upon life's labyrinthine path once more
Is heard the sigh, and grief revives anew;
The friends are told, who, in their hour of pride,
Deceived by fortune, vanished from my side.

No longer do they hear my plaintive song,
The souls to whom I sang in life's young day;
Scattered for ever now thy friendly throng,
And mute, alas! each sweet responsive lay.

My strains but to the careless crowd belong,
Their smiles but sorrow to my heart convey;
And all who heard my numbers erst with gladness,
If living yet, roam o'er the earth in sadness.

Long buried yearnings in my breast arise,
Yon calm and solemn spirit-realm to gain;
Like the Æolian harp's sweet melodies,
My murmuring song breathes forth its changeful strain,
A trembling seizes me, tears fill mine eyes,
And softer grows my rugged heart amain.
All I possess far distant seems to be,
The vanished only seems reality.

II.

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN.

THE ARCHANGELS' SONG.

RAPHAEL.

THE sun still chants, as in old time,
With brother-shepherds in choral song,
And with his thunder-march sublime
Moves his predestined course along.
Strength find the angels in his sight,
Though he by none may fathomed be;
Still glorious is each work of might
As when first formed in majesty.

GABRIEL.

And swift and swift, in wondrous guise,
Revolves the earth in splendour bright,

The radiant hues of Paradise
  Alternating with deepest night.
From out the gulf against the rock,
  In spreading billows foams the ocean, —
And cliff and sea with mighty shock,
  The spheres whirl round in endless motion.

MICHAEL.

And storms in emulation growl
  From land to sea, from sea to land,
And fashion, as they wildly howl,
  A circling, wonder-working band.
Destructive flames in mad career
  Precede thy thunders on their way;
Yet, Lord, Thy messengers revere
  The soft mutations of Thy day.

THE THREE.

Strength find the angels in Thy sight
  Though none may hope to fathom Thee;
Still glorious are Thy works of might,
  As when first formed in majesty.

III.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen!
  Mortal, all hail!
Thou, of earth's prison
  Dreary and frail,
  Bursting the veil,
Proudly hast arisen!

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Rich spices and myrrh,
To embalm Him we brought;
His corpse to inter
His true followers sought.
In pure cerements shrined,
'Twas placed in the bier;
But, alas! we now find
That Christ is not here.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen!
Speechless His love,
Who to earth's prison
Came from above,
Trials to prove.
Now is He risen!

CHORUS OF YOUTHS.

Death's gloomy portal
Now hath He rended,—
Living, immortal,
Heavenward ascended;
Freed from His anguish,
Sees He God's throne;
We still must languish,
Earthbound, alone.
Now that He's left us,
Heart-sad we pine;
Why hast Thou left us.
Master divine?

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen,
Death hath He slain;

Burst ye your prison,
Rend ye each chain!
Songs of praise lead ye, —
Love to show, heed ye, —
Hungry ones feed ye, —
Preaching, on speed ye, —
Coming joys plead ye, —
Then is the Master near,
Then is He here!

IV.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Vanish, dark clouds on high,
Offspring of night!
Let a more radiant beam
Through the blue ether gleam,
Charming the sight!
Would the dark clouds on high
Melt into air!
Stars glimmer tenderly,
Planets more fair
Shed their soft light.
Spirits of heavenly birth,
Fairer than sons of earth,
Quiv'ring emotions true
Hover above;
Yearning affections, too,
In their train move.
See how the spirit band,
By the soft breezes fanned,
Covers the smiling land, —
Covers the leafy grove,
Where happy lovers rove,
Deep in a dream of love,

True love that never dies!
Bowers on bowers rise,
  Soft tendrils twine;
While from the press escapes,
Born of the juicy grapes,
  Foaming, the wine;
And as the current flows
O'er the bright stones it goes, —
Leaving the hilly lands
  Far, far behind, —
Into a sea expands,
  Loving to wind
Round the green mountain's base;
And the glad-wingèd race,
  Rapture sip in,
As they the sunny light
And the fair islands bright,
  Hasten to win,
That on the billows play
With sweet deceptive ray,
Where in glad choral song
Shout the exulting throng;
Where on the verdant plain
  Dancers we see,
Spreading themselves amain
  Over the lea.
Some boldly climbing are
  O'er the steep brake,
Others are floating far
  O'er the smooth lake.
All for a purpose move,
  All with life teem,
While the sweet stars above
  Blissfully gleam.

V.

MARGARET AT HER SPINNING-WHEEL.

My heart is sad,
  My peace is o'er;
I find it never
  And nevermore.

When gone is he,
  The grave I see;
The world's wide all
  Is turned to gall.

Alas, my head
  Is well-nigh crazed;
My feeble mind
  Is sore amazed.

My heart is sad,
  My peace is o'er;
I find it never
  And nevermore.

For him from the window
  Alone I spy;
For him alone
  From home go I.

His lofty step,
  His noble form,
His mouth's sweet smile,
  His glances warm,

His voice so fraught
With magic bliss,
His hand's soft pressure,
And, ah, his kiss!

My heart is sad,
My peace is o'er;
I find it never
And nevermore.

My bosom yearns
For his form so fair;
Ah, could I clasp him
And hold him there!

My kisses sweet
Should stop his breath,
And 'neath his kisses
I'd sink in death!

VI.

SCENE. — A GARDEN.

Margaret. Faust.

MARGARET.

Dost thou believe in God?

FAUST.

Doth mortal live
Who dares to say that he believes in God?
Go, bid the priest a truthful answer give,
Go, ask the wisest who on earth e'er trod, —
Their answer will appear to be
Given alone in mockery.

MARGARET.

Then thou dost not believe? This sayest thou?

FAUST.

Sweet love, mistake not what I utter now!
Who knows his name?
Who dares proclaim:
Him I believe?
Who so can feel
His heart to steel
To say: I believe Him not?
The All-Embracer,
The All-Sustainer,
Holds and sustains He not
Thee, me, Himself?
Hang not the heavens their arch o'erhead?
Lies not the earth beneath us, firm?
Gleam not with kindly glances
Eternal stars on high?
Looks not mine eye deep into thine?
And do not all things
Crowd on thy head and heart,
And around thee twine, in mystery eterne,
Invisible, yet visible?
Fill, then, thy heart, however vast, with this,
And when the feeling perfecteth thy bliss,
Oh, call it what thou wilt,
Call it joy! heart! love! God!
No name for it I know!
'Tis feeling all — nought else;
Name is but sound and smoke,
Obscuring heaven's bright glow.

VII.

MARGARET'S PRAYER.

O THOU well-tried in grief,
Grant to thy child relief,
And view with mercy this unhappy one!

The sword within thy heart,
Speechless with bitter smart,
Thou lookest up toward thy dying Son.

Thou lookest to God on high,
And breathest many a sigh
O'er His and thy distress, thou holy One!

Who e'er can know
The depth of woe
Piercing my very bone?
The sorrows that my bosom fill,
Its tremblings, its aye-yearning will
Are known to thee, to thee alone.

Wherever I may go,
With woe, with woe, with woe,
My bosom sad is aching!
I scarce alone can creep,
I weep, I weep, I weep,
My very heart is breaking.

The flowers at my window
My falling tears bedewed,
When I, at dawn of morning,
For thee these flow'rets strewed.

When early to my chamber
The cheerful sunbeams stole,
I sat upon my pallet,
In agony of soul.

Help! rescue me from death and misery!
Oh, thou well-tried in grief,
Grant to thy child relief,
And view with mercy my deep agony!

FROM FAUST — SECOND PART.

I.

ARIEL.

When in spring the gentle rain
Breathes into the flower new birth,
When the green and happy plain
Smiles upon the sons of earth,
Haste to give what help we may,
Little elves of wondrous might!
Whether good or evil they,
Pity for them feels the sprite.

II.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

When the moist and balmly gale
Round the verdant meadow sighs,
Odours sweet in misty veil
At the twilight-hour arise.
Murmurings soft of calm repose
Rock the heart to childlike rest,
And the day's bright portals close
On the eyes with toil oppressed.

Night already reigns o'er all,
Strangely star is linked to star;
Planets mighty, sparklings small,
Glitter near and gleam afar.
Gleam above in clearer night,
Glitter in the glassy sea;
Pledging pure and calm delight,
Rules the moon in majesty.

Now each well-known hour is over,
Joy and grief have passed away;
Feel betimes! thou'lt then recover:
Trust the new-born eye of day.
Vales grow verdant, hillocks teem,
Shady nooks the bushes yield,
And with waving, silvery gleam,
Rocks the harvest in the field.

Wouldst thou wish for wish obtain,
Look upon yon glittering ray!
Lightly on thee lies the chain,
Cast the shell of sleep away!
Tarry not, but be thou bold,
When the many loiter still;
All with ease may be controlled
By the man of daring will.

III.

ARIEL.

HARK! the storm of hours draws near,
Loudly to the spirit-ear
Signs of coming day appear.
Rocky gates are wildly crashing,
Phœbus' wheels are onward dashing;

(A wonderful noise proclaims the approach of the sun.)

Light doth mighty sounds beget!
Pealing loud as rolling thunder,
Eye and ear it fills with wonder,
Though itself unconscious yet
Downward steals it, 'mongst the flowers
Seeking deeper, stiller bowers,
'Mongst the foliage, neath the rock;
Thou'lt be deafened by the shock!

FROM FAUST — SECOND PART.

SCENE THE LAST.

ANGELS.

[Hovering in the higher regions of air, and bearing the immortal part of Faust.]

THE spirit-region's noble limb
Hath 'scaped the Archfiend's power;
For we have strength to rescue him
Who labours every hour.
And if he feels within his breast
A ray of love from heaven,
He's met by all the squadron blest
With welcome gladly given.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS.

Yonder roses, from the holy
Hands of penitents so lowly,
Helped to render us victorious,
And to do the deed all-glorious;
For they gained us this soul-treasure.
Evil ones those roses banished,
Devils, when we met them, vanished.
Spirits felt love's pangs with pleasure,

Where hell's torments used to dwell;
E'en the hoary king of hell
Felt sharp torments through him run.
Shout for joy! the prize is won.

THE MORE PERFECT ANGELS.

Strains of mortality
  Long have oppressed us;
Pure could they ever be,
  If of asbestos.
If mighty spirit strength
  Elements ever
Knew how to seize at length,
  Angels could never
Linked twofold natures move,
  Where single-hearted;
By nought but deathless love
  Can they be parted.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS.

See where a spirit-race
  Bursts on the sight!
Dimly their forms I trace
  Round the far height.
Each cloud becometh clear,
While the bright troops appear
  Of the blest boys,
From the Earth's burden free,
In a glad company
  Drinking in joys,
Born of the world above,
  Spring-time and bliss.
May they forerunners prove
Of a more perfect love,
  Linked on to this!

THE BEATIFIED CHILDREN.

Thus as a chrysalis
  Gladly we gain him,
And as a pledge of bliss
  Safely retain him;
When from the shell he's free
  Whereby he's tainted,
Perfect and fair he'll be,
  Holy and sainted.

DOCTOR MARIANUS.

(In the highest, purest cell.)

Wide is the prospect here,
  Raised is the soul;
Women on high appear,
  Seeking their goal.
'Mongst them the radiant one,
  Queen of the skies,
In her bright starry crown
  Greets my glad eyes.

(*With ecstasy.*)

Thou who art of earth the queen,
  Let me, 'neath the blue
Heavenly canopy serene
  Thy sweet mystery view!
Grant the gentle solemn force
  Which our breast can move,
And direct our onward course
  Toward thy perfect love.
Dauntless let our courage be,
  At the bright behest;
Mild our ardour suddenly,
  When thou biddest us rest.

Virgin, type of holiness,
  Mother, honour-crowned,

Thou whom we as queen confess,
Godlike and renowned.
Round her, in gentle play,
Light clouds are stealing;
Penitents fair are they,
Who, humbly kneeling,
Sip in the ether sweet,
As they for grace entreat.

Thou, who art from passions free,
Kindly art inclined,
When the sons of frailty
Seek thee, meek in mind.
Borne by weakness' stream along,
Hard it is to save them;
Who can burst lust's chains so strong,
That, alas, enslave them?
Oh, how soon the foot may slip,
When the smooth ground pressing!
Oh, how false are eye and lip,
False a breath caressing!

MATER GLORIOSA *hovers past.*

CHORUS OF PENITENT WOMEN.

To bright realms on high
In majesty soaring,
Oh, hark to our cry
Thy pity imploring,
Thou help to the cheerless,
In glory so peerless!

MAGNA PECCATRIX (St. Luke vii. 36).

By the love, which o'er the feet
Of the God-transfigured Son

Dropped the tears, like balsam sweet,
Spite of every scornful one;
By the box of ointment rare,
Whence the drops so fragrant fell;
By the locks, whose gentle care
Dried His holy members well —

MULIER SAMARITANA (St. John iv.).

By the well where Abram erst
Drove his flock to drink their fill;
By the bucket which the thirst
Of the Saviour served to still;
By the fountain, balm-exhaling,
That from yon bright region flows,
Ever clear and never failing,
As round every world it goes —

MARIA ÆGYPTIACA (*Acta Sanctorum*).

By the sacred spot immortal,
Where the Lord's remains they placed;
By the arm, that from the portal
Drove me back with warning haste;
By my forty years of lowly
Penance in a desert land;
By the farewell greetings holy
That I wrote upon the sand —

THE THREE.

Thou who ne'er thy radiant face
From the greatest sinners hidest,
Thou who Thine atoning grace
Through eternity providest,
Let this soul, by virtue stirred,
Self-forgetful though when living,
That perceived not that it erred,
Feel thy mercy, sin forgiving!

UNA PŒNITENTIA.

(Once named Margaret, pressing near them.)

O radiance-spreading One,
Who equalled art by none,
In mercy view mine ecstasy!
For he whom erst I loved,
No more by sorrow proved,
Returns at length to me!

BEATIFIED CHILDREN.

(Approaching as they hover round.)

He now in strength of limb
Far doth outweigh us,
And as we tended him,
So will repay us.
Early removed were we
Far from life's story;
Trained now himself, will he
Train *us* in glory.

THE PENITENT, *once named Margaret.*

Linked with the noble band of spirits,
Scarce can the new one feel or see
The radiant life he now inherits,
So like that holy band is he.
See how he bursts each bond material,
And parts the olden veil at length, —
In vesture clad in grace ethereal,
Comes in the glow of youthful strength.
Oh, let me guide his steps victorious,
While dazzled by the new-born light.

MATER GLORIOSA.

Come! raise thyself to spheres more glorious,
He'll follow when thou meetest his sight.

DOCTOR MARIANUS.

(Prostrated in adoration.)

Oh, repentant sinful ones,
On that bright face gaze ye,
And in grateful orisons,
Your blest fortune praise ye!
Be each virtue of the mind
To thy service given!
Virgin, mother, be thou kind!
Goddess, queen of heaven!

CHORUS MYSTICUS.

Each thing of mortal birth
Is but a type;
What was of feeble worth
Here becomes ripe.
What was a mystery
Here meets the eye;
The ever-womanly
Draws us on high.

FROM GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN.

ACT II.

LIEBETRAUT *plays and sings.*

HIS bow and dart bearing,
And torch brightly flaring,
Dan Cupid on flies;
With victory laden,
To vanquish each maiden
He roguishly tries.
Up! up!
On! on!

His arms rattle loudly,
His wings rustle proudly,
And flames fill his eyes.

Then finds he each bosom
  Defenceless and bare;
They gladly receive him
  And welcome him there.
The point of his arrows
  He lights in the glow;
They clasp him and kiss him
  And fondle him so.
Hei ei o! Popeio!

FROM EGMONT.

ACT I.

CLARA *winds a skein and sings with Brackenburg.*

THE drum gives the signal!
  Loud rings the shrill fife!
My love leads his troops on
  Full armed for the strife,
While his hand grasps his lance
As they proudly advance.

My bosom pants wildly!
  My blood hotly flows!
Oh, had I doublet,
  A helmet, and hose!
Through the gate with bold footstep
  I after him hied, —
Each province, each country
  Explored by his side.

The coward foe trembled
  When rattled our shot:
What bliss e'er resembled
  A soldier's glad lot!

ACT III.

CLARA *sings.*

Gladness
  And sadness
And pensiveness blending;
  Yearning
  And burning
In torment ne'er ending;
  Sad unto death.
Proudly soaring above;
  Happy alone
Is the soul that doth love!

FROM WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

BOOK II. CHAP. XIII.

RETRIBUTION.

HE that with tears did never eat his bread,
  He that hath never lain through night's long hours,
Weeping in bitter anguish on his bed —
  He knows ye not, ye dread celestial powers.
Ye lead us onward into life. Ye leave
  The wretch to fall; then yield him up, in woe,
Remorse, and pain, unceasingly to grieve;
  For every sin is punished here below.

Who gives himself to solitude,
Soon lonely will remain;
Each lives, each loves in joyous mood,
And leaves him to his pain.
Yes! leave me to my grief!
Were solitude's relief
E'er granted me,
Alone I should not be.

A lover steals, on footstep light,
To learn if his love's alone;
Thus o'er me steals, by day and night,
Anguish before unknown;
Thus o'er me steals deep grief.
Ah, when I find relief
Within the tomb so lonely,
Will rest be met with only!

BOOK IV. CHAP. XI.

My grief no mortals know,
Except the yearning!
Alone, a prey to woe,
All pleasure spurning,
Up towards the sky I throw
A gaze discerning.

He who my love can know
Seems ne'er returning;
With strange and fiery glow
My heart is burning.
My griefs no mortals know,
Except the yearning!

PHILINE'S SONG.

Sing not thus in notes of sadness
Of the loneliness of night:
No! 'tis made for social gladness,
Converse sweet, and love's delight.

As to rugged man his wife is
For his fairest half decreed,
So dear night the half of life is,
And the fairest half, indeed.

Who could hail the day with pleasure,
Which but interrupts our joys,
Scares us from our dreams of leisure
With its glare and irksome noise?

But when night is come, and glowing
Is the lamp's attempered ray,
And from lip to lip are flowing
Love and mirth, in sparkling play;

When the fiery boy, that wildly
Gambols in his wayward mood,
Calms to rest, disporting mildly,
By some trivial gift subdued;

When the nightingale is trilling
Songs of love to lovers' ears,
Which, to hearts with sorrow thrilling,
Seem but sighs and waken tears;

How, with pulses lightly bounding,
Leaps the heart to hear the bell,
Which, the hour of midnight sounding,
Doth of rest and safety tell.

Then, dear heart, this comfort borrow
In the long day's lingering light —
Every day hath its own sorrow.
Gladness cometh with the night!

EPILOGUE TO SCHILLER'S "SONG OF THE BELL."

[This fine piece, written originally in 1805, on Schiller's death, was altered and recast by Goethe in 1815, on the occasion of the performance on the stage of the "Song of the Bell." Hence the allusion in the last verse.]

To this city joy reveal it!
Peace as its first signal peal it!
— *Song of the Bell* — concluding lines.

And so it proved! The nation felt, ere long,
That peaceful signal, and, with blessings fraught,
A new-born joy appeared; in gladsome song
To hail the youthful princely pair we sought;
While in the living, ever-swelling throng
Mingled the crowds from every region brought,
And on the stage, in festal pomp arrayed,
The Homage of the Arts [1] we saw displayed.

When, lo! a fearful midnight sound I hear,
That with a dull and mournful echo rings.
And can it be that of our friend so dear
It tells, to whom each wish so fondly clings?
Shall death o'ercome a life that all revere?
How such a loss to all confusion brings!
How such a parting we must ever rue!
The world is weeping — shall not we weep, too?

[1] The title of a lyric piece composed by Schiller in honour of the marriage of the hereditary Prince of Weimar to the Princess Maria of Russia, and performed in 1804.

He was our own! How social, yet how great
Seemed in the light of day his noble mind!
How was his nature, pleasing yet sedate,
Now for glad converse joyously inclined,
Then swiftly changing, spirit-fraught, elate,
Life's plan with deep-felt meaning it designed,
Fruitful alike in counsel and in deed!
This have we proved, this tested, in our need.

He was our own! Oh, may that thought so blest
O'ercome the voice of wailing and of woe!
He might have sought the Lasting, safe at rest
In harbour, when the tempest ceased to blow.
Meanwhile his mighty spirit onward pressed
Where goodness, beauty, truth, for ever grow;
And in his rear, in shadowy outline, lay
The vulgar, which we all, alas, obey!

Now doth he deck the garden-turret fair
Where the stars' language first illumed his soul,
As secretly yet clearly through the air
On the eterne, the living sense it stole;
And to his own, and our great profit, there
Exchangeth to the seasons as they roll;
Thus nobly doth he vanquish, with renown,
The twilight and the night that weigh us down.

Brighter now glowed his cheek, and still more bright,
With that unchanging ever-youthful glow, —
That courage which o'ercomes, in hard-fought fight,
Sooner or later, every earthly foe, —
That faith which, soaring to the realms of light,
Now boldly presseth on, now bendeth low,
So that the good may work, wax, thrive amain,
So that the day the noble may attain.

Yet, though so skilled, of such transcendent worth,
This boarded scaffold doth he not despise;
The fate that on its axis turns the earth
From day to night, here shows he to our eyes,
Raising, through many a work of glorious birth,
Art and the artist's fame up toward the skies.
He fills with blossoms of the noblest strife,
With life itself, this effigy of life.

His giant-step, as ye full surely know,
Measured the circle of the will and deed,
Each country's changing thoughts and morals, too,
The darksome book with clearness could he read;
Yet how he, breathless 'midst his friends so true,
Despaired in sorrow, scarce from pain was freed, —
All this have we, in sadly happy years,
For he was ours, bewailed with feeling tears.

When from the agonising weight of grief
He raised his eyes upon the world again,
We showed him how his thoughts might find relief
From the uncertain present's heavy chain,
Gave his fresh-kindled mind a respite brief,
With kindly skill beguiling every pain,
And e'en at eve when setting was his sun,
From his wan cheeks a gentle smile we won.

Full early had he read the stern decree.
Sorrow and death to him, alas, were known;
Ofttimes recovering, now departed he, —
Dread tidings, that our hearts had feared to own!
Yet his transfigured being now can see
Itself, e'en here on earth, transfigured grown.
What his own age reproved, and deemed a crime,
Hath been ennobled now by death and time.

And many a soul that with him strove in fight,
And his great merit grudged to recognise,
Now feels the impress of his wondrous might,
And in his magic fetters gladly lies;
E'en to the highest hath he winged his flight,
In close communion linked with all we prize.
Extol him then! What mortals while they live
But half receive, posterity shall give.

Thus is he left us who so long ago, —
Ten years, alas, already! — turned from earth;
We all, to our great joy, his precepts know,
Oh, may the world confess their priceless worth!
In swelling tide toward every region flow
The thoughts that were his own peculiar birth;
He gleams like some departing meteor bright,
Combining, with his own, eternal light.

L'ENVOI.

Now, gentle reader, is our journey ended.
Mute is our minstrel, silent is our song;
Sweet the bard's voice whose strains our course attended,
Pleasant the paths he guided us along.
Now must we part, — oh, word all full of sadness,
Changing to pensive retrospect our gladness!

Reader, farewell! we part perchance for ever.
Scarce may I hope to meet with thee again;
But e'en though fate our fellowship may sever,
Reader, will aught to mark that tie remain?
Yes! there is left one sad, sweet bond of union, —
Sorrow at parting links us in communion.

But of the twain, the greater is *my* sorrow, —
Reader, and why? — Bethink thee of the sun,
How, when he sets, he waiteth for the morrow,
Proudly once more his giant race to run, —
Yet e'en when set, a glow behind him leaving,
Gladdening the spirit, which had else been grieving.

Thus mayst thou feel, for thou to GOETHE only
Biddest farewell, nor carest aught for me.
Twofold *my* parting, leaving me all lonely, —
I now must part from GOETHE and from thee,
Parting at once from comrade and from leader, —
Farewell great minstrel! farewell gentle reader!

Hushed is the harp, its music sunk in slumbers,
Memory alone can waken now its numbers.

THE END.

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